

Pocket Series }
No. 217.

BEADLE'S

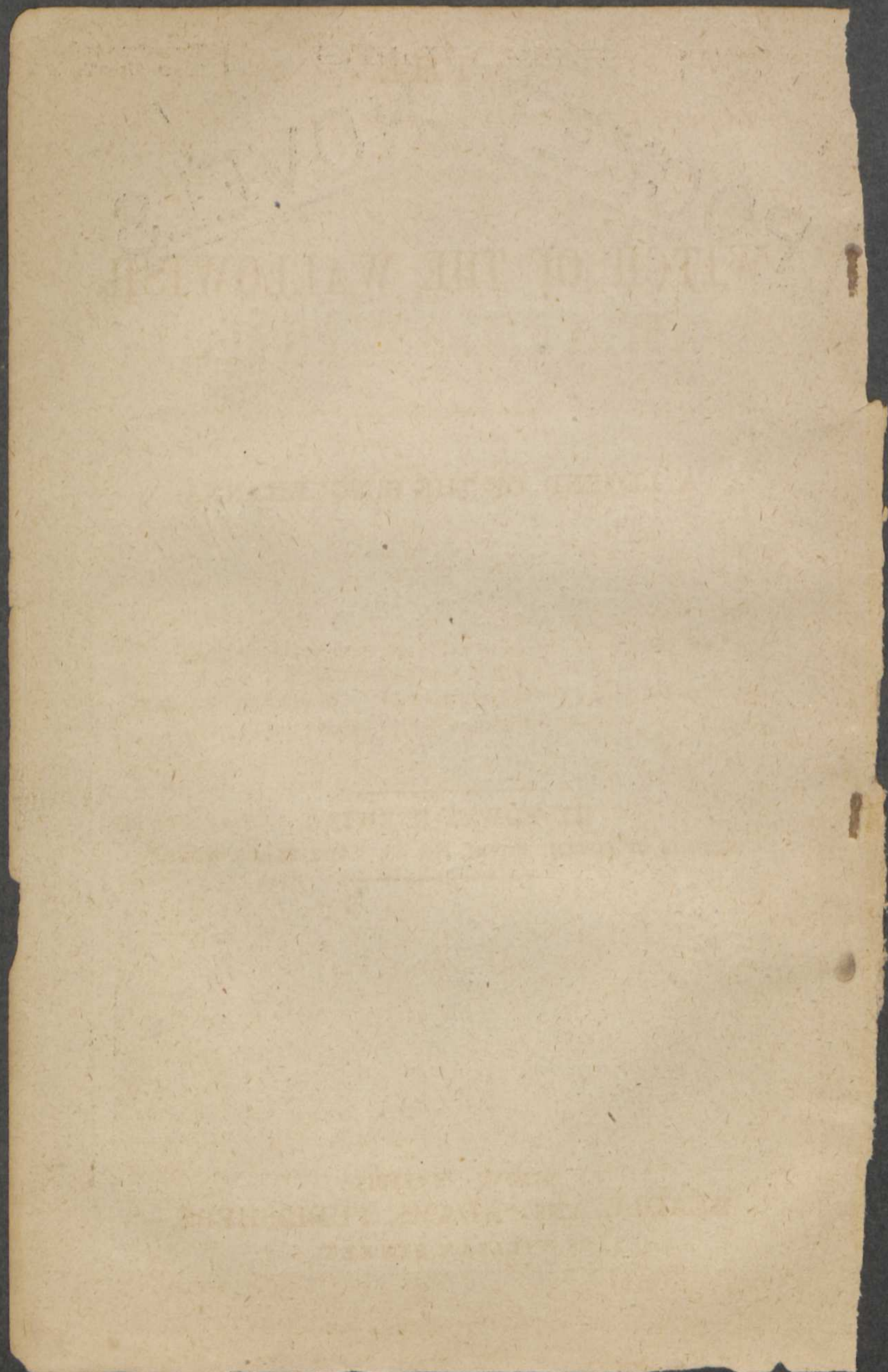
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POCKET NOVELS



Witch of the Wallowish.





THE
WITCH OF THE WALLOWISH.

A LEGEND OF THE SUSQUEHANNA.

BY EDWIN E. EWING,
AUTHOR OF POCKET NOVEL No. 53, "THE BLACK WOLF."

NEW YORK:
BEADLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS,
98 WILLIAM STREET.

THE
WITCH OF THE WILLOWS
A LEGEND OF THE SUDBURY
Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1861, by
BEADLE AND COMPANY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
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WALLOWISH.

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CHAPTER I.

“Aye, but to die and go we know not where.
To lie in cold obstruction.”—*Shakspeare.*

’Twas midnight, and the sleety showers pattered on the window panes, as the moaning gusts of wind drove fitfully along the murky clouds that obscured the heavens and howled mournfully around the antiquated house, in which a single chamber was lighted by a dim lamp that threw its faint blaze through the bedizened casement into the gloom without.

Within three men were seated around a small fire, which burned dimly on the hearth, conversing in an under tone; and on a low-curtained bed, at the further end of the room, lay a fourth, breathing with a heavy and difficult respiration. Near the head of the bed stood a small stand covered with writing materials and a roll of paper, which appeared to have been recently traced with the sable fluid.

The eldest of the three seated about the fire, who appeared to take the most conspicuous part in the smothered conversation carried on by the trio, was a tall, sparely-formed man, with slightly grizzled hair, small gray eyes, and thin shrunken cheeks. He wore a dark brown doublet of antique cut, and a blue cloth coat and a buff-colored

breeches, with broad silver knee and shoe-buckles. The other two were dressed nearly in the same fashion, but less costly.

"He appears to sleep soundly," said the principal of the party, as he cast a look towards the couch of the sick man.

"Yes," replied Niel Riley, the man to whom the first speaker seemed to address himself, "but he breathes deep and heavily—the doctor must have administered a deep and powerful opiate. But its effects will soon work off, and he will awake for better or worse."

"That was rather an unfortunate stroke of business for Tomlin. I had no idea he would be so rash in the—what he might have foreseen—fruitless attempt to secure his money bags," continued the first speaker; "but what has transpired can't be amended by regrets, and we'll have to be comforted with Pope's saying, 'Whatever is, is right.'"

"But the daughter will be a pretty prize for some fellow, if she has the good fortune to inherit all her father's estate," said Niel, varying the conversation.

"Well, she's sole heir by the will," said the other, "and what is more remarkable, he would have no clause inserted in that document, by which the administrator may be governed, in case of her dying before the estate comes into her hands."

"In case that should happen, the nearest relations will have a chance to fight over the bone," Niel said smiling, as he gave a nod to his companion.

"Who are the nearest relations?" asked O'Ferguson, without appearing to notice Niel's meaning gestures.

"Second cousins are the nearest," answered Niel, "and yourself is one of them."

"Nothing nearer than second cousins?" inquired the first speaker, musingly, and after a little hesitation, added—"I believe not—and but two—Greenberry and myself. But Mr. Greenberry being guardian, I have no doubt that he'll take special care of the orphan daughter—having

some promising sons, it may be his best interest perhaps to do so."

"But you have a grandson too, of near the same age, and of noble strain. Ha! ha! Think of the odds in the O'Ferguson favor, when the blood is considered."

This remark of Niel's excited a slight smile on the countenance of O'Ferguson, but relapsing again into his meaning mood, he replied:

"This is mere speculation. Perhaps none of the young worthies, when near a score of years has rolled away, will please the fortune-favored damsel; or perhaps the child may never number half the days which are required to bring her to maturity. A thing, I think, altogether likely, for the nursed plant is very apt to die."

"And then there will be some trouble about the Tomlin estate," added Niel, laughing, "but Davy and myself would have a conspicuous part to perform, if such difficulties should happen to turn up."

"And what part of the play would you and the redoubted Davy, (who, by the by, appears now to be gliding down the stream of Time under easy sail) act, if such unfortunate circumstances should come to pass?" asked Miles.

"Favor our friends, to be sure," Niel answered. "Ha, Davy Darly, man, rouse up—you don't dream of what importance your sleepy head may be in the councils of the nation in future. Ha! ha! ha!"

The slumbering Davy roused into life again by the hearty shake which Niel bestowed upon his broad shoulders, rubbed his eyes to clear his vision and dispel his waking doubts, and with a yawn asked how the sick man did.

A slight movement on the part of the invalid showed the watchers that he was recovering from his dull, heavy opiate sleep. He raised his eyes and called for some water, which O'Ferguson, who approached the bedside, placed to his lips. After swallowing a mouthful of the cooling liquid, he inquired the hour of the night, and was informed that day was just beginning to glimmer in the murky East.

"Move my cot in front of the window," said the sick

man, "that I may look upon the dawn of the last day these eyes shall ever behold!"

His bed was moved as requested, and he lay long in silence, gazing on the faintly illumined east, as the rays of morning shot up from the horizon, and struggled through the murky clouds which still thickly canopied the heavens, till a bright crimson flush shot over the sky. Withdrawing his gaze at length from the glowing firmament, he turned toward the three men who stood in silence by the bedside.

"Dear friends, I must soon leave you for that untried world whence no wanderer ever returns. Bring in my little Rose that I may behold once more the image of her lamented mother, and the family all, till I take a final leave of all most dear to me on earth."

O'Ferguson motioned to Niel to do as the dying man requested, while he endeavored to console him with words of hope and comfort, but the inevitable fate of the invalid was too apparent to himself as well as his comforter, to admit of a single ray of hope. The dagger had passed through the left lobe of his lungs, inflicting a wound which the physician pronounced mortal, as soon as it was examined.

Mr. Greenberry and his lady soon made their appearance, leading little Rose between them, followed by the rest of the family in mournful silence, and holding their breath, lest even a deep-drawn sigh should disturb the object of their solicitude. Little Rose, whose bright sunny locks had been fanned by the soft breezes of but three summers, was too young to feel anything of that awful solemnity which hallows a death-bed scene, but looking up into Mrs. Greenberry's face for the consoling smile which always shed a joy and sunshine on her gentle spirit, and seeing nothing but tear traces on the cheeks of the only mother she had ever known, and her brow bent with sorrow, she too caught the prevailing contagion, and commenced weeping bitterly.

"Farewell, my little rose," said the father, as he conveyed the innocent flower of mortality to the maternal

care of Mrs. Greenberry ; but that little one, as yet, could feel none of those hallowed sensations, which in after life were destined to pour through her soul with a holy and vivifying influence, like the rays of light through the flood-gates of morning, and was only anxious to regain the arms of her adopted mother.

"Be a mother to my dear Rose, and may heaven bless you !" said the affectionate father.

Mrs. Greenberry bowed in silent assent, and placed the girl beside her own natural son, who was of the same age as his adopted sister, and who, while this scene was enacting, was clinging to his mother's side. The dying parent still following with the fond eyes of affection his little daughter, gazed for a moment in silence on the twin brother and sister, as it were, then placing a hand on each of their heads, said :

"May heaven bless you and make you as dear to each other as my departed Mary was ever dear to me ! Farewell ! And farewell, dear friends all. Let me press your hands for the last time. Farewell Mr. Greenberry, be a friend to my daughter. And you Miles, you have ever been kind to me."

But these last words of the dying man shook the stern soul of O'Ferguson, and his rigid countenance changed its color, as though some secret cord in his bosom had been suddenly touched which had long lain dormant.

"Farewell Niel and Davy ; where are you ? My sight grows dim and you fade from before me !"

The breathing of the dying man became more difficult ; his last words produced but a rattling sound in his throat. His eyes grew cold and glassy ; he stretched out his arms and John James Tomlin lay a corpse, and Rose was left alone in the world, without father or mother, sister or brother ! Those who stood by the couch of the dead man withdrew in awe and silence, and the gloom of sorrow rested on the house of the honored dead.

CHAPTER II.

“Then pause and be enlightened—there is more

In such a survey than the sating gaze

Of wonder pleased.”—*Childe Harold*.

The early and greater part of Mr. Tomlin's life had been spent in the great emporium of New York in commercial pursuits. By industry and frugality he had acquired an extensive fortune; but his whole business career he had run through alone, and spent a life of “single blessedness” while in pursuit of the golden bauble, with no partner to soothe his cares and sweeten the hours of relaxation. Of kindred ties by blood, we may say he had none, the nearest being removed to that of second cousins, and those were Greenberry and Miss O’Ferguson, the only representatives of even that remote connexion. In early youth and the light hours of boyhood, John James Tomlin and Henry Greenberry had become attached by the strongest ties of friendship, but destiny had shaped out a different path for each, and pursuits of business had cast their homes far asunder.

Mr. Tomlin, too, was the senior of his friend several years, and of a cool, calculating business temperament, and laid hold of the object of his pursuit with a tenacious grasp, and executed his plans with an inflexible perseverance, which never failed to crown his efforts with ultimate success. Greenberry, on the other hand, had all the ardor and impetuosity of youth, with that romantic fervor which soars above, and flies from the dry monotony of every-day life in search of the grand and beautiful.

But the chain of their friendship was still kept bright by

frequent and mutual interchange of friendly greeting. Mr. Tomlin having consumed the ardor of a well-employed life in the vortex of the business world, finding the autumn of manhood, touching with its sear his dark brown locks, and the sloping path of old age opening gradually before him, began to contrast his lonely and cheerless situation with that of his less fortune-favored, but more contented and less happily situated friend. Him he saw poor, or at least not rolling in that spontaneous abundance, which, by his own self-denying habits of life he had collected around him, which only served now to attract the eyes of envy, and draw around him the hollow-hearted friends of prosperity with the cyren song of flattery. On the other hand he saw the friend of his youth, though far from rich, in the world's estimation, possessing that treasure which the more wealthy well may envy. He saw him the center of a large and happy family, who looked up to him as the object of their love and esteem; in that situation which robs approaching age of all its anticipated ennui, and spreads a bed of down for the decline of life, when love with its balmy influences hovers around, to soothe and dispel the sorrows and transient care of the passing hour.

But who shall be comfortless and alone, when affection entices him with her smile of witchery, and spreads out her lily arms to receive him? Who shall stand gazing on the mansions of content, when beauty beckons him with her white hand to approach and share the enjoyments which she alone hath power to strew along his dreary course?

In Mary Nevre, Mr. Tomlin found at length that being for whom his lone bosom had so long sighed. Connubial felicity shed its genial rays of happiness around him, and his pathway of life seemed brightning through the dim vista of future years. But it was the radiant glow of sunset—the last bright gleam of expiring day! Having purchased a residence on the Wallo-wish, a small branch of the Susquehanna, far away from the busy throng of the metropolis of the Empire State, and near the residence of his old friend Henry Greenberry. The former business

merchant relapsing into the passive gentleman, abandoned his counting-house and ponderous folios, and with his winning Mary settled down 'mid rural delights, in the midst of the romantic scenery of bill and dale that environs the Wallo-wish, or Dark-waters.

But earthly treasures and earthly happiness, bright in anticipation, as the rainbow tints, are too apt to flit like them before the pursuers, and instead of fancied pleasure, which he fondly hoped to retain, he grasps but dis-appointment and sorrow.

Situated in their mansion of retirement, Mr. Tomlin and his bride saw one short year glide rapidly away on the wings of love and pleasure; for time seems to speed with redoubled impetus when it bears along with it enjoyment and delight. Nuptial felicity seemed weaving the ties of future endearment and parental affection; but the first anniversary of the propitious wedding is often celebrated 'm d sorrow and tears, and such was the fate that awaited the retired merchant. In one year from her joyous wedding-day, friends were gathered around the death-bed of the late happy bride, to take the last leave of the dying wife; and the bereaved husband was severed from his tender Mary; but the pledge of her love remained, to call back the affections of the father from beyond the grave.

In little Rose, the eye of the fond father descried all the characteristics of his lamented Mary, ready to burst forth in blooming womanhood, perpetuating the worth and loveliness of that mother whom it was her fate never to behold. That fell swoop of death, which deprived Mr. Tomlin of the best of partners, left his peaceful home desolate and little Rose motherless; but the friend of his former years came forward, still to be a friend in the hour of affliction; and in Mrs. Greenberry, Rose found a paragon of that tender mother, of whom death had so early deprived her.

Though Mr. Tomlin had retired from business, his affairs still at intervals required his presence among the scenes of his youthful pursuits. Interest accruing from unextinguished debts, proceeds from lots, houses, &c. often

called him back to the great emporium of the Union. On one of these occasions, and about three years after the death of his lady, Mr. Tomlin was returning from the place of his nativity, with a large sum of money in gold. The night was cloudy and dark, the crescent moon had long sunk beneath the western horizon, and the little stars were veiled by the murky canopy which shrouded the sky. He was, however, fast approaching home—that home which, since the death of his wife, had been occupied by the family of his early friend. He had crossed the dilapidated bridge that arched the Wallo-wish, close by the house of Miles O’Ferguson, and was hurrying along the road that wound along the bank of the stream, through a long defile, skirted on either side by deep thickets of hazel and elder. A sensation allied to fear thrilled through the veins of the traveler as he plunged into this spectral-like place, and pursued his course along its dark thoroughfare, at a pace that was rapidly carrying him towards home. Two-thirds of the road was already passed, and a short turn through the narrowest part of the defile, and winding close along the beach where the stream swept impetuously over its rocky bottom, with an incessant roar, lay before our nocturnal wayfarer. Once through this dark pass, the rest of the road seemed safe and short. But as he entered it, his horse was suddenly stopped by a strong arm, and a gruff voice demanded his purse. A stroke of his heavy whip, however, disengaged our hero, and he attempted to dash off from the robbers; but in this he was foiled, for another of the band seizing him by the leg dragged him from the saddle, while the frightened horse galloped away. Mr. Tomlin immediately grappled with the assassin, and seizing him by the throat, hurled him to the ground. The bandit finding himself so roughly handled, together with the not very pleasant prospect of being strangled, drew a dagger and stabbed his antagonist. The ruffian succeeded in releasing himself by the time his companions came to his rescue, and securing the booty, made off, leaving their victim dying as they supposed. The next morning Mr. Tomlin was found by some of O’Ferguson’s family, lying

in the pass more dead than alive, conveyed home and medical aid procured. But the physician on examining the wound pronounced it fatal.

By the murdered man's request, Miles O'Ferguson was summoned to write his will, by which all his property, save a gratuitous recompense to her guardian, Mr. Greenberry, was bequeathed to Rose, when she should arrive at the age of eighteen.

The sequel to the chapter has been recorded in the preceding one.

CHAPTER III.

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth—the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land."—*Solomon's Songs*.

Mr. Tomlin's death occurred in the early part of March, and for a space shed its wonted gloom over the family. But the wave of Time rolling on to eternity, soon sweeps the traces of sorrow from the past, as the ocean surge obliterates the stroller's foot prints from the sand. The angry dirge of winter was lost in the balmy breeze of spring—the flowers again appeared upon the earth—the woodlands put on their green robes, and the sylvan songsters awakened their soft notes among the blooming bowers.

Three years of genial health twined the airy ringlets round the infant brow of little Rose, and tinted her dimpled cheeks with the ruby flush of childhood. Her volatile gambols with little Ernest, her twin brother, in every other respect but by birth, was beginning to delight the maternal eye, and joy the parental bosom of Mrs. Greenberry.

But it too often happens that where affection chains the heart to an object, disappointment bursts the links asunder, dispelling our blighted hopes and frustrating our fondest desires.

Mrs. Greenberry was destined soon to feel all the anguish of a bereaved mother, in the loss of her too fondly cherished flower; and with ten-fold force did that blow seem to fall on her, who had been enjoined, as it were, by

a voice from the tomb, to bestow her maternal regard on the destitute Rose.

It was a soft, balmy evening, in the blooming month of June, that the two children attended by their nurse, were at play on the bank of a small stream which meandered through the flowering meadows that margined the sloping lawn, stretching away with a gentle declivity from the mansion, till terminating in embowering woods and deep-tangled brakes.

The road leading to the dwelling of the late John T. Tomlin, now occupied by Mr. Greenberry and family held its course through the forest, and crossed the brook near the spot where the nurse, with her tender charge, was whiling away the hours in childish sports. A pedler, worn and weary with his ponderous pack, happening along the road at the time, disengaged himself of his miscellaneous burden, when he came near the girl, and wiping the perspiration from his brow, seated himself on the wayside, and commenced chaffering with her for the sale of his wares.

"I say, my pretty maid, don't you want to buy some fine tings?" commenced the pedler. "You wants a tress shawl—I sell you one sheap."

"I believe not, sir," replied the girl; "I have no money" a woman's invariable reply when she is about driving a bargain; "but I'll look at some of your goods, if it is not giving you too much trouble."

"Oh, no trouple, no trouple; me show te ladies te fine tings."

And the strolling dry goods dealer commenced unbuckling his shop and displaying a great variety of female trinkery. Accordingly the goods were all unpacked, commended by the merchant and admired by the maid, and repacked again without the poor pedler being able to effect a sale. Then the desire was expressed to look at some of his jewelry; perhaps there was something in this department she would like to purchase, rounding off every period with protestations of regret for the unnecessary trouble the gentleman was putting himself to on her account, and with

a delicate hint at the low state of her finances. The pedlar next produced his trinkets in great variety. Breast-pins, clasps, finger rings, plain and with sets, gold pens, silver pencil cases, guards, chains, pearl necklaces, and, in short, every thing of the species that has power to attract a lady's eyes, and captivate a lady's heart, were displayed in glittering array examined by the maid with many encomiums, and replaced in their casket again, as new objects of admiration appeared. The girl had now overhauled the Dutchman's whole assortment, without buying a cent's worth, and as a last resort the pedler opened a small box containing strings of beads, saying to the girl as he held up a lot—

"You puy a string for the little folks."

"What's the price?" asked the girl.

"Only tree cent."

"But I have two little ones to please, and if I buy at all, I must purchase for both, and that amounts to a fip, you know."

"Me only see one; you have put one little pony; you puy him some bead," said the man of the pack, looking over the girl's shoulder, who sat with her back to the children while she viewed the contents of the pack.

The girl turned her eyes hastily in the direction of her charge, and a fiendish smile might have been seen to play for a moment on the countenance of the pedlar, as he commenced hastily buckling up his pack, preparatory to a start. The girl ran instantly towards the boy on perceiving him alone, crying:

"Emery, where's sis? What have you done with sis?"

The child held out his arms to the girl, as she approached him, laughing with childish delight. The girl growing more impatient for the safety of Rose, who was nowhere to be seen, caught the boy in her arms and lifted him from the ground, as though in her increasing anxiety, she would force a solution of the mysterious disappearance of the girl from him by caresses.

"Where's sis, Erny? Where's sis? Where's Rose gone to?" eagerly inquired the girl.

But little Ernest only laughed in reply, and repeated the words mechanically after the terrified nurse, lisping in his infant accents, "Rose—sis—Anny," his attendant's name, clapping her around the neck at the same time, and making an effort to kiss her. But the increasing concern of the girl left her in no mood to participate in his baby fondness, and she responded in a somewhat harsher tone than was her wont to her baby caresses.

"Why don't you tell, you little dunce? Where's your sister? Where's Rose gone to?"

The child finding his love repulsed by unkind words and looks broke into a fit of weeping, as may be readily imagined, saying:

"Rose gone. Anny don't like me."

"Erny mustn't cry," replied the girl soothingly. "Come kiss Anny, and let's go and hunt sis."

The child again smiled and embraced his nurse's neck, while she wiped the tears from his eyes, and "kissed him into rest" again.

The girl hurried along the bank of the stream with little Ernest in her arms, reproaching herself for having neglected her charge to gratify a vain curiosity, and trembling with fear that she should discover, at every turn of the stream, the lost child lying in its bed, a victim of her neglect and carelessness. But no traces of the little girl were discovered along the margin of the stream, and the terrified girl penetrated some distance in the gloomy forest, calling the lost one by name; but no sound gave answer to her cries of anguish save the echoes of her own voice that rung through the hollow woods. But once, and once only she imagined she heard a faint scream as of a child, and hastened far into the depths of the forest whence the sound came, but no answer to her call, no traces of the lost one could be seen or heard.

The shadows of evening were now gathering fast over the dark forest and deepening the gloom of its solitude. The hoot of the owl alone breaking the stillness of the

summer eve, and objects inanimate looming up amid the gathering gloom, assumed every moment a more spectral aspect.

The superstitious anxiety of the girl now for a time overcame her concern for the lost Rose, as she turned, with little Ernest, still in the direction of home.

The family had taken alarm at the girl's protracted absence, and turned out *en masse*, and were searching the neighborhood in quest of Anny and her charge. The nurse, however, soon made her appearance on the lawn, and narrated the appalling story to the assembled company, interlarding it with a plentiful profusion of tears. The solicitous mother failed not to heap a mountain of reproach on the poor girl's carelessness in abandoning the children to examine a strolling pedlar's goods.

"What business had she with the pedlar's trinkets? She had other motives, no doubt for leaving the children than just to look at a pedlar's pack."

With a multitude of such jibes, to all of which the girl replied only with tears and protestations of her innocence. An Irish lad, who resided with Mr. Greenberry's family, and who had been standing by with apparent uneasiness, while this dialogue was passing between mistress and maid, and despairing of its coming to an end, broke in upon their discourse with---

"And troth, my bonny Ann, were you acquainted with the strollin' storekaper?"

"No," was the laconic reply.

"And what sort of a lookin' divil was he?"

"He was a middling large man," the girl answered shortly.

"And how was he dressed? And what color was the blackguard's hair?" pursued the Irishman.

"He had on a frock coat rather the worse for wear and an indifferent fur hat. The remainder of his dress I took no notice of. He had red hair and gray, twinkling eyes," continued the girl, now fairly embarked in her description of the pedlar, "his nose was short and thick, his forehead broad, and by his accent I took him to be a German."

"Troth I thought as much," responded Pat; "the Dutch vagabond ought to be sent to the workhouse, along wid all the rest of his strollin' tribe. An' which way was the ape goin' Anny dear? Did he tell ye that?"

"He was on his way to the mansion, he told me," replied the girl.

"Divil the any mansion did he visit the day then," answered Pat; "and I'm thinkin' the ramblin' blackguard had something to do with conjurin' off wee winsome Rose."

"That cannot be possible," added Mr. Greenberry, breaking into the discourse. "The child, perhaps, has strayed away from Ernest, after some object, or has lain down and fallen asleep. At any rate we'll not find her by parleying here."

And coming to this conclusion, unanimously, torches were procured, and a general search of the surrounding neighborhood commenced. Though the search was extended to a late hour of the night, no trace of the babe could be discovered.

CHAPTER IV.

"There's nought in this cold world like sympathy
'Tis so becoming to the soul and face,
Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,
And robes sweet friendship in a Brussels lace."

The succeeding day passed as the previous night had done, and with the same disappointed success. The news of the lost child flew rapidly, creating a deep sensation throughout the neighborhood, and a great many persons collected to join in the search for little Rose, but their efforts were unavailing.

Mr. O'Ferguson, with all his household, and Niel Rley were among the first and most solicitous to ferret out the mystery and again rescue Rose from her kidnappers, if she were really stolen, as many began to protest was their opinion, or recover the child if lost in the woods. Evening at length closed on the scene, dispersing those who were in search of the lost girl, to their respective homes, and the fields and forests were once more left to the dominion of calm solitude and silence.

Save Mrs. Darly and her spouse; for, in this instance, "the gray mare was the better horse"—the family at the mansion were left alone. This lady, who subsequently became so conspicuous under the appellation of the "Hag of the Wallo-wish," tarried with Mrs. Greenberry to condole with her for the loss of her adopted daughter.

Davy Darly, the passive husband, sat quietly in a remote corner of the room, with the solemnity of an owl and the gravity of a sage, communing, doubtless with his own pleasant thoughts; ruminating on things past, present and

to come, while his more loquacious spouse poured the oil of consolation on the heart of the bereaved mother.

"Gracious! Mrs. Greenberry, you have a fine boy, if you never find the girl," continued Mrs. Darley, who had been keeping the organs of articulation in full play for some time previous. The soothing, hypocritical tone in which this lady carried on her discourse was not the least peculiar of her many peculiarities. Her conversation was usually interlarded with rather strong expressions, which, however, lost all of their obnoxious influence on the most fastidious ears, when uttered in Mrs. Darly's soft and captivating tone.

"I think that our little Timon grows faster than your little boy, Mrs. Greenberry. Don't you think he's larger, Davy?"

This question was directed to her demure spouse, who condescended to rouse into something like a cognoscitive attitude, and being consulted on so important a theme, and with a knowing nod, a self-reproving smile, and a "hem!" answered

"Yes."

"What delightful playmates they would make. Gracious! Mrs. Greenberry, you must come some evening and take tea with us, and bring little Ernest with you, till he and Tim have a romp together."

The requested lady gave a dubious consent to the solicitations of Mrs. Darly, and inquired after her little girl, who was the twin sister of the classically named son.

"The child has been slightly indisposed for several days," said Mrs. Darly.

"Not seriously ill?" Mrs. Greenberry returned, inquiringly.

"Oh, no! nothing more than a slight touch of the colic or the worms. I left her in old Nina's care this morning, and ordered her to give her a dose of ground ivy tea; she'll be perfectly well in a day or two."

"When your daugh'er recovers in health you and Mr. Darly must pay us a visit, and bring the children along. I should like to see little Christiana and Timon. It's been

more than a year since I saw the twins. I suppose they have grown to be great big lumps by this time. Don't let my secluded life deter you from visiting us; we always like to see our friends whenever they come. Mr. Greenberry's business calls him so much abroad, that I have few opportunities of returning their friendly calls, but you mustn't mind that. Do call whenever you can make it convenient."

"We'll try to make you a formal visit as soon as possible," was Mrs. Darly's reply to the pressing invitation.

"But, gracious! it's dangerous to let children outside the doors, in these times of depredations, when people don't scruple to commit any crime. I hope you'll find Rose soon, and it'll all go well again. But we must go. Good night Mrs. Greenberry."

"Good bye," returned the lady addressed.

"Good night to you all. Come, Davy, where are you?"

But the man of little noise was outside of the door already, and made known his whereabouts to his better-half by a "hem—here."

"Gracious, Mrs. Greenberry, I fear we have outstayed our time. Our folks will begin to think we're lost, along with Rose, and start out to seek us," Mrs. Darly said, closing her conversation with a long drawn, masculine "h-a-w! h-a-w!"

The door closed behind Mrs. Darly and her doughty Davy, and they were once more alone. When completely out of ear-shot of the house, the former broke the silence which the two had maintained since quitting the mansion, with a loud, masculine laugh in her wonted manner.

"Gracious! Davy, Mrs. Greenberry seems to take the loss of her adopted girl hard, h-a-w! h-a-w! I suppose she was dreaming of a match at some future day, between that ninny of a son and Mr. Tomlin's daughter; but that fine scheme is frustrated."

Davy replied in his usual monosyllable manner, and his ruling star continued, but in a more earnest and stern tone,

"Good heavens ! it's not the loss of the child that disturbs their peace. No, gracious ! it's their anxiety about the property. If they had that secure there would be no concern felt for poor little Rose, as they all term her. But there'll be found better heirs to the estate. H-a-w ! h-a-w ! And that's the real secret of their grief."

Her valiant spouse who trudged along by her side grunted his assent, and in this strain of conversation, the worthy couple beguiled their way home.

CHAPTER V.

"The night drave on wi' sang and clatter."

Tom O'Shanter.

The night was dark and uncomfortable. The thunderstorm of the previous evening had subsided into a gentle but incessant rain, which poured down through the darkness without intermission. In an old dilapidated house, wasting away its once paramount architecture by piecemeal, sat two persons before a small wood fire, with a table between them, which contained a decanter of brandy, a bowl of sugar, and a pitcher of water. On either side of the small deal table sat the two worthy heroes of this singular scene, each with a cup of prepared beverage in his hand.

The personage who appeared to preside at the jovial board, was a man of tall, slender stature, with a thin sharp nose, a prominent but somewhat narrow forehead, thin lips and dark eyes, in whose deep and slumbering fires seemed to dwell a subtle soul, rife with intrigue and knavery. He was dressed in a black cloth surtout, velvet doublet and light inexpressibles. His feet, which were placed on the table, were case'd in heavy Jefferson boots, and his left el-

bow resting on the table, while in his right hand he held the flowing bowl, applying it at intervals to his lips.

His companion was of a more sullen and moody cast of countenance, occupied the other side of the table, with his feet protruded towards the fire, and his right hand which held the bowl resting on his knee, while his left hung negligently by his side. His small gray eyes twinkled 'neath their beetling brow, and were fixed with a thoughtful and vacant stare on the flickering blaze. Thus seated he had maintained for a long time a dogged silence, while he seemed to meditate on some event past or anticipated. Not so, however, with his ever restless companion, who persisted in breaking in upon his reverie with frequent scraps of bachanalian songs, and loud calls, such as—

“Rouse up, Mr. Culpepper! Have you lost your tongue? You've been maintaining a deaf and dumb silence for a good half hour. Have you another peddling expedition in anticipation? Ha! ha! ha!”

This raillery roused the dreamer at length, and he replied:

“What are you bawling about Niel?” for it was no other than Niel Riley. “I think you are the most uncompromising fool I ever saw. Can't you let a man indulge in his Elysian dreams, without breaking in upon his reveries with your confounded prate?”

This singular rebuke served only to increase the obstreperous mirth of Niel, who commenced in a voice of thunder the old song of the “Bonny Brown Bowl.” Finishing the stanza, he seized his comrade by the shoulder, and with a jerk that nearly tumbled the meditating Culpepper on the floor, he shouted in his ear—

“Rouse up man, and don't sit with an empty bowl on your knee. Fill up a bumper to your favorite bard. Who shall it be? Ha! ha! ha!”

The worthy Culpepper obeyed the summons of Niel, and filling his glass to the brim, he said—

“Goldsmith—the man of social pleasure, wit and song!”

Off went the bumper in honor of Britain's rural bard,

and Niel, replacing his bowl on the board with a clatter, roared out a couplet from the "Deserted Village:"

"Near yonder thorn that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passer's eye."

"Ha! ha! ha! I admire your taste, Mr. Culpepper," Niel enthusiastically exclaimed. "Now fill up a glass, Mr. Culpepper, 'to Bobby Burns, the man of love and song, and of the social glass, too. Ha! ha!"

"Burns is my favorite," pursued Niel, commencing a panegyric on the works of the immortal ploughman. "Just mark Mr. Culpepper, how he makes the wisest man the world ever saw, praise his Scotch drink."

"Give him strong drink until he winks,
'That's sinkin' in despair"—

and reciting the well-known prelude to "Scotch Drink," Niel concluded with a loud stamp and his usual "ha! ha! ha!" that made the old hail ring. "Who would have thought," he continued, "of going to Judah's wisest king for a text to praise Scotch whiskey, but Burns? Ha! ha! ha!"

"Very pathetic poet," said Culpepper, "but not so sublime and passionate as Byron, nor so harmonious as Goldsmith, nor so unstooping in his flight as Pope."

"Pope! that maligner of the ladies!" interrupting him. "Don't name him with Bobby Burns, Mr. Culpepper."

"Your Burns will lose none of his lustre by being associated with Pope," replied Culpepper. "Maligner of the ladies, as you say," he continued, "he is one of my favorites on that very account."

An obstreperous laugh harbingered Niel's reply to this retort on the ladies.

"I forgot that you are a lady hater, Culpepper; but you have grown vindictive like all other old bachelors who have been jilted in their younger days. You vented your spleen upon Mrs. Greenberry's nurse, in the guise of a ped-

lar, I suppose, to your heart's content. Ha! ha! ha! but that was a clever done trick. I never saw you look so well as you did under that pack and red wig. The girl swore you were a Dutchman, you counterfeited the pedlar so well in every respect. The only fault she could complain of is that your accent was rather Germanish.

And Niel closed his rallying speech with a loud burst of his merriment, in which Culpepper joined.

"The vixen told me twenty times she had no money, but still persistent in seeing something else, and I kept her curiosity on tiptoe, as long as possible, by showing her the goods, piece by piece, and hinting what finery was still to come, till she had got through with all the articles of clothing. I contrived to feel her with many successful hints at the rare assortment of jewelry, which was nothing more than some of the madam's trinkets that I had rubbed up—that she plunged headlong into the gold mine, examining jewel after jewel, link by link, grinding me down in price, still persisting she had no money, till we arrived at length to the bottom of the old carpet bag—the first time I ween, it had ever been converted into a pedlar's pack. I produced some strings of beads we had borrowed for the occasion from the young niggers. These took the buzzy's eye more than all the other articles, or perhaps they suited her purse best, for she immediately commenced bantering me for a couple of strings, which brought about the favorable opportunity for breaking up the show, the thing I began to desire most earnestly, for night was fast approaching, and I verily believe she would have sat there all night if there were curiosities enough to have kept her attention riveted."

At this point in the story, Culpepper and Niel started to their feet, as the door trembled with a loud ringing rap, which was repeated several times, and the postal being opened, Mrs. Darly and her spouse were added to the company.

"Gracious! Niel," said Mrs. Darly, "are you and Dandy carousing here at this late hour? You had better be in your beds."

"We might return the compliment, Mrs. Darly," Niel said in his usual boisterous and mirthful manner, "by suggesting the same advice."

"Gracious! there's a wide difference in our motives for keeping late hours. Urgent business has forced us out this stormy night, to seek you two who should have been at the bridge long ere this, instead of holding an orgie in this old hut."

"This old hut!" ejaculated Niel. "Listen to that, Mr. Culpepper! Terming my ancestors' hall an old hut! Ha! ha! ha!"

'Thou, the hall of my father art gone to decay,
In thy once smiling garden the hemlock and thistle
Has choked up the rose which late bloomed in the way.'

Mr. Culpepper and I have been 'vexing with mirth the drowsy ear of Night,' as Byron says."

"Well, you've vexed it long enough," returned the lady. "For H-e-a-v-e-n's sake don't make beasts of yourselves any longer."

"This is a wild night, Mrs. Darly," Niel commenced after adjusting matters to his satisfaction. "How's the old man?"

"I fear he's getting worse," the lady replied, "and he wishes to see you immediately."

"Heavens! this is a wild night for a man to be out in, when he's so comfortably cribbed."

"Gracious! and do you shrink from a little rain that a woman can travel through without any inconvenience?" asked the lady, rather ironically.

Niel mused for a moment, and asked if to-morrow wouldn't do?

"No, Mr. Riley. You know you are one of the principal persons in the business, and he wants to see you as soon as possible, while he is able to transact anything."

"Why, is he likely to be much worse?" asked Niel.

"Do you think we would have turned out this night to hurt you, if it hadn't been necessary? I sent Caesar for

the doctor before we left home, and H-e a-v-e-n knows whether he will survive till morning."

"Oh, if the case is so desperate as you represent it, delay isn't to be thought of," said Niel. "But this is

'Sic a night to take the road in,
As nae poor sinner was a'road in.'"

"If you're so tender," added the lady, sarcastically, "I'll lend you my cloak."

"It would be ungallant to accept it," Niel replied, accompanying the sally with a fit of boisterous laughter, and seizing Davy by the shoulder gave him such a rude jerk, as like to have laid the doughty husband on the floor, exclaiming:

"Come Davy, let's take a bumper at parting—

———'for I never before
Felt the glow that now gladdens my heart to the core;
Let us drink! who would not?—since through life's varied round,
In the goblet alone no deception is found.'"

"Fill Mrs. Darly another glass of our toddy, and we'll leave you to your Elysian fancies."

Culpepper did as requested, and turning off their glasses the trio left the gloomy hall in care of the last-mentioned worthy.

"I have the drinking tools now to myself, said Culpepper, when he was alone, but the 'big-bellied-bottle' of Niel has little of soul-stirring power in it. Gradually his arms relaxed, his head rolled back on his shoulders, his eyes closed, his breast heaved with a heavy respiration, and Dandy Culpepper slumbered in the drunkard's oblivion.

CHAPTER VI.

“The wind blew, as ’twould blow its last,
The rattling showers rose on the blast,
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed,
Long, loud and deep the thunder bellowed;
That night a child might understand
The de’il had business on his hand.”

Tam O’Shanter.

Mrs. Darly, with her valorous escort Niel, and her Doughty spouse, had scarcely arrived at O’Ferguson hall, ere the increasing storm again resumed all its former violence. The raging tempest driving the black thunder-clouds from the Northwest, swept onward in its wild careering course with an incessant roar, scarcely less terrific than the awful bursts of thunder that every minute broke forth “the rattling crags-among,” as though the wild hills of the Wallo-wish were tumbling from their beetling summits into the valleys beneath.

The pouring of a sheet of lurid flame through the inky darkness, displayed the terrors of the night with tenfold magnificence. While the water raged with the greatest violence, two horsemen entered the bridge that crossed the Wallo-wish, within a few paces of O’Ferguson Hall. The dilapidated structure creaked and trembled at every gust that struck it, threatening to crash into the turbid stream beneath, which roared and boiled over its rocky bed. The over-charged torrent had already reached the broken floor, and washed with a splashing noise through the crevices. Higher yet higher rose the waves each moment, as the

heavy claps of thunder burst fearfully around ; and the rain, falling in sheets rolled in torrents from the hills.

"Creek risin' very fast, Doctor. Ole bridge not safe to cross jist now," Caesar remarked as they emerged from the end, and found their footing once more on *terra firma* ; for he it was who had sought the physician, and was bringing to the relief of his master.

But the words were scarcely uttered, ere the old bridge, with a fearful crash, went into the stream, and was borne in fragments on the foaming billows.

"Tie up my animal beneath this shed, Caesar," the doctor said to the negro, as he dismounted from his reeking steed, for I have yet further to ride to-night, although it storms so terribly.

"My Gor-a mighty ! Doctor, not gwine out in dis storm agin to-night ? Let me stable the horse and give him some feed," replied the negro with surprise.

"No matter how hard it storms, doctors must ride ; the sick must be attended to," the physician coolly answered as he strode rapidly toward the house.

A heavy rap at the door, thrice repeated, brought an old negress from the dark recesses of the kitchen, who unbarred the broken portal that closed the entrance, and shading her eyes with one hand from the faint glare of the wick that burned in a saucer of lard, in default of a more improved article of illumination, which she carried in the other, she peeped scrutinizingly in the physician's face, as if to recognize the intruder and then exclaimed joyously :

"Doctor, is dis you ? Bless de Lor', I'm glad you come."

"This is I, Nina," he replied, for he seemed to be acquainted with all the household. "How's Mr. O'Ferguson ?"

"Go' bless de old man, he werry bad ; but I hope de Lor' spare him dis time," the old negress answered as she lighted the doctor along the dark, damp passage that led to the stairway.

Up the stairs the physician mounted to the chamber of the sick, while the old negress retraced her steps, mutter-

ing as she went back to her dark, sooty abode in the kitchen. The doctor entered the apartment of the invalid, and found Niel Riley seated on the bed beside the sick man, and Mrs. Darly, his daughter, in a broken arm-chair, close by his side. The doughty Davy, as usual, occupied a position in the back ground, with his broad shoulders resting against the wall.

"How do you do, doctor? For good night would be out of place in this wild storm. We feared Caesar would never be able to find you. Father had a sudden relapse after you left him, which concerned us a good deal; but he has happily revived again," said Mrs. Darly, rising from an easy arm-chair, with many professions of regard, and shaking the physician's hand.

The doctor saluted the company in his brief manner, and tried the patient's pulse—who was now reclining in a half-sitting, half-lying position, with his head resting on a pile of pillows; looked at his tongue, asked a few questions, gave a few directions respecting the proper regimen, and saying he had other calls, took leave of the company, assuring the patient he would soon be restored.

"O Ferguson taking up the conversation where the doctor's entrance had broken it off, continued—

'Yes, Niel, it rests wholly on you and Davy to bring this business to a happy issue.'

"Never fear Davy and me," replied Niel; "we'll make all as plain to the court as old law books. Davy, man, come forward. I foretold your sleepy nod would one day be of great importance to the councils of the nation!"

The sober, silent Davy did as requested, and shifting his position from the wall, took one by the bedside.

"And we may count on you and Davy proving what the will doesn't specify?" continued O'Ferguson.

"Certainly," returned Niel; "May they not Davy?"

The deliberate Davy looked dubious, as if to inquire what it might be he wanted to attest, and with a "hem," grumbled "yes" at a hazard.

"Well, how will you frame your story to make it the

more concise and put the best face on the matter?" O'Ferguson inquired.

"Ha! ha! nothing more easy," replied Niel, laughing. "The will was written when Tomlin was on his death-bed, and a few hours before he breathed his last; yet his mind was perfectly sane as we can attest with truth—bequeathed his daughter the whole of his estate, to be paid into her hands when she attained the age of eighteen, but not prior to that time. No other disposition, however, is made of the estate by that document, in case the intended heiress should fall a victim to disease, or disappear in any other way previous to its falling into her hands. And now comes the part through which we must help the old gentleman through with. After the will had been signed and closed in a formal manner, Mr. O'Ferguson remarked to Mr. Tomlin, that he thought it a very precarious document in its present state, inasmuch as no human power had control over the destiny of an individual and the mortality inherent to human nature, for aught that would be discerned of the future, might remove the heir intended beyond the care of earthly responsibilities, before the time specified in the will should place the estate in her possession. The bequeather, who was fast sinking under the effect of his wounds, but whose mind still retained its wonted energy to the last, despite the power of pain over his physical strength, heard the suggestion of Mr. O'Ferguson with attention, and said, after musing some time, 'if it be the will of Providence that my Rose shall never inherit her father's estate, then it is my desire that it pass into the hands of Miles O'Ferguson and his heirs, with the exception of a small house and lot in New York, which I would like Mr. Greenberry to have to dispose of as he may think best.' There's policy in allowing Mr. Greenberry a small share; it looks more death-bed like. Ha! ha! ha! That's a feasible story; ain't it O'Ferguson. What do you say, Davy, with your counsel-wise head?"

"That will do—that will do admirably. But how will the dubious Davy ever be able to perform his part?" inquired O'Ferguson.

"I'll make sure that the doughty Davy does the thing that is polite," said Niel, with his usual gayety, if I may be allowed to term such pleasure mirthful.

"But we cannot touch the estate until the time of the daughter's non-age is expired; unless Greenberry will give up peaceably, which is not likely," said O'Ferguson; "but your deposition can be taken in writing, and placed in the hands of a magistrate for preservation, should any misfortune befall the witnesses before the time transpires for treating the matter before a court of justice. And when once in possession of that estate we can wreak terrible vengeance on our old enemies, Fletcher and Dinby, whose farms lie contiguous, and as you know, Helen, were taken up under the same survey, and were afterwards patented off in plantations, to subsequent and smaller purchasers. Well, by examining the dates of the several patents, we find the estate of John James Tomlin bears the oldest in the manor. By the negligent way of executing their business common to our ancestors, the patents of these three estates, Tomlin's, Fletcher's, and Dinby's, are allowed to overlap to a considerable extent. But Tomlin's, as I have said, being the most ancient, must be filled first; to do which it will require half their estates."

"Now, if Greenberry persists in keeping possession of the estate until the time specified by the will has expired, the only course left us to pursue is to counteract his sway over the property as much as possible, by an injunction; and enter suit against Fletcher and Dinby, to lie on the docket till Greenberry is ousted from the estate. And then for vengeance. Helen, you will attend to this business if I shouldn't live to see it consummated. But I *will* live; I *won't* die! I will see the end! I have struck friend and foe who have stood between us and vengeance! I have drained many a bitter cup to the dregs, and I will quaff the sweet one! But, Helen, you shall finish, if I fail, what a lifetime has been too short to accomplish.

The old man exhausted by his efforts of body and mind, sunk back on the bed, while his eyes glared wildly from beneath the gray hair that fell dishevelled about his

brows. He lay calm for a moment, and then pointed his skinny finger towards the opposite wall, while deepening horror was depicted on his front, exclaiming wildly—

“Look! There he is! I see him pointing with his menacing finger! He frowns and threatens me with his ghastly, menacing look! Oh, God!” and his words were lost in the deafening clap of thunder that burst over the house.

A ball of fire ran down the wall, and sparkled with a blue florid blaze.

“Oh, heavens!” exclaimed Niel, bursting through the room door, and half springing, half tumbling down the stairway, into the dark passage beneath, followed by the dumb, terror-stricken Davy, who rushed headlong into the obscure recess behind Neil, rolling and tumbling down the steps, till the broken floor beneath brought up, with sundry bruises on his head, arms and body, his violent and precipitate retreat.

A shudder of horror thrilled the heart of the wretched O’Ferguson, as he endeavored to hide his eyes from the terrible vision that haunted him, and burying his face in the pillow, screamed—

“Oh, Helen! take him away! Take him away, my daughter!”

“Father, don’t struggle so violently. There’s nothing—I see nothing to frighten or disturb you but the raging storm. Calm yourself, or those spasmodic convulsions which perilled your life to-night will return again.

She spoke, but her words were heard not, for the form of that wretched man had stiffened with the last throes of death, and he lay alike cold and insensible to fright or consolation. No form of life now moved in that chamber of fear and death, save that unshaken woman, whose brow still retained its unrelaxed and wonted expression of rigid sternness, neither heightened by the stirring and frightful scene, nor softened by subduing sorrow. Once, and once only, did she start to her feet, but recovering her self-possession instantly again, her breast grew as calm as the current that runs dark and deep below. She bent over

the stiffened corpse, and placed her hand on the temple, and then resting it on the heart for a moment, said quietly—"My father—he is *dead!*"

CHAPTER VII.

"Oh! my son Absalom! would to God I had died for thee!—oh! Absalom, my son!—*Samuel, 18th chap., 33d v.*

About a year passed away since the mysterious disappearance of little Rose, and no trace could be discovered, no tidings heard of the lost child.

The vernal season had robed and decked the landscape in all its voluptuous splendor. The soft breezes of early summer, laden with perfume from the flowering meadows, swept quietly and sweetly through the lattice, through which Mrs. Greenberry, seated by her husband's side, was gazing on the witching prospect of sloping lawns, widening meadows and green woodlands that lay expanded and inviting to the admiring view.

But the lady gazed in sadness on the scenes of loveliness that smiled in their vernal bloom, wooing the heart away from life's dull cares to a realm of ideal beauty, where the soul, mounting on Fancy's airy wings, may disport and bask in the heaven of poesy. And instead of joyous and pleasant sensations, feelings of melancholy and depression pervaded the breast of Mrs. Greenberry, for they brought back anew the reminiscence of poor little Rose. Where was she now? She, who had gambolled over these green lawns in childish mirth, and rolled amongst the flowers. And the balmy zephyrs, playing with the tender foliage, and sighing softly through green arbors, had once played with the sunny curls of that fair daughter, who was now lost! lost!—and found the damask rose on her cheek fairer than the rose of the garden.

"How beautiful these scenes, yet how sad the recollections they awaken," remarked Mrs. Greenberry to her

husband, after she had mused long in silence, "and what a train of calamities are about to follow fast in the footsteps of that terrible misfortune which deprived us of poor little Rose! Truly it has been said that evils come not alone."

"Emeline," said the husband, and he looked gravely into his wife's face, "we should not murmur against seeming misfortunes that have befallen us, nor dread anticipated evils. The upright are promised light in the midst of darkness, and we should act in such a manner that the past will always be a bright and pleasant spot for memory to turn to."

"Though," replied Mrs. Greenberry, "we have ever acted from the promptings of virtue and benevolence, yet those scenes (though not from any act on our own part,) by their very loveliness create a feeling of sorrow and gloom."

"But you should find consolation in the teaching that all things work together for God's glory, and their own good. Rose has been doubtless snatched away, that the chastening rod of adversity may prepare us to receive some more precious and valuable gift."

"Nothing at least that the world can bestow," returned the lady, "can be more precious or more dear to me than that which the dying hand placed under my protection, and enjoined me, with a parting breath, to deal tenderly with, and yet I have lost her—and how? Not by the unaverting stroke of death, to which all must quietly submit?—yet in her health and bloom has she gone—but where and how who can tell?"

"Think not, however," replied Mr. Greenberry, "that little Rose, whether on the earth, or slumbering in its bosom, is lost or deserted—the pure and innocent are never unprotected or abandoned. But who are those two men that approach the mansion?" and the speaker directed his wife to two persons who came slowly up the road.

"One is Mr. Riley," replied the lady. "A kind friend we have in him, at least. What a great pity he is carried away so often from the path of rectitude by the temptations of intemperance!"

But her lord made no reply, and they awaited in silence the approach of the two strangers. Niel, as usual, presented himself with many warm professions, exchanged greetings in his ardent and dashing manner, and presented Mr. Stuyvesant, sheriff of the county. This meagre specimen of official dignity returned the courtesy of his new acquaintances with a consequential display of his counterfeit grace and *classic* manners—which too often cut a ludicrous figure in the eyes of good sense—describing an arc of a circle of ninety degrees, to an angle of forty-five degrees depression with his hat, so as to fairly display the enormous quantity of papers which he had stowed away in the crown

“A fine prospect, Mrs. Greenberry,” Niel commenced, directing his discourse to the lady, as he seated himself with his accustomed *sang froid*. “A beautiful site, this, for a residence. I always admired it. The locality itself invites health; every fresh breeze pays its respects to you—”

“Yes, I like it very much,” replied the lady, her attention captivated already with Niel’s oily words.

“I often contrast it with Mrs. Darly’s burrow,” Niel continued. “I always call it a burrow. Ha! ha! ha! She calls it a Hall—fond of fine names, you understand. Ha! ha! ha! She covers all that’s harsh with soft words, and always consults Davy, poor devil, when strangers are by—then signifies what he shall say by a judicious suggestion. Do you see the art that’s employed? Yes, Davy’s only a cipher to make up the decimal point,” Neil added, in a half-soliloquizing manner. “Well, as I was going to say, Mrs. Greenberry,” pursued Niel, dropping his facetious vein, “you are blessed with a fine situation compared to O’Ferguson Hall—a real burrow it is—buried beneath the hills, among rocks with the stream at the door, threatening to sweep the old rubbish away at every freshet. Ha! ha! Well, as may be imagined, it is always a sickly place to live in—the madam’s unwell at the present time—”

“Ah, is anything serious the matter?” inquired the sympathizing Mrs. Greenberry.

“No, no,” Niel answered; “nothing more than a trif-

ing brush—makes the old plague peevish, though. Ha! ha! She's at loggerheads with all around, when she's a little ailing. Do you hear, Mr. Greenberry? Your cousin, Helen Darly, is indisposed," he said, in a louder tone, directing his discourse from the lady to her husband. "Your cousin Helen's sick. She persists in claiming kin."

"I hope she's not in a dangerous situation," said the gentleman addressed, breaking off the conversation he and the official worthy had been conducting, and directing his discourse to Niel.

"Oh, no, nothing serious," returned Niel; "a fit of the *spleen* most likely. Cross as old Nick, too. She's been teasing at Mr. Stuyvesant and me all the morning to call on you about that bit of *sham business*. We had to humor her you know.

"Well, what does Mrs. Darly desire of me now?" inquired Mr. Greenberry.

"Oh, nothing more than the formal palaver of a nominal deed, to suit the law, that she may be able to prosecute the old feud between the O'Fergusons, and Fletchers, and Dinbys, with a fair prospect of victory," Niel answered, carelessly.

"Well," replied Mr. Greenberry, "I don't like making nominal grants of that which doesn't exclusively belong to me—and, worst of all, I dislike being privy to persecution, whether just or unjust, and I can't believe Mr. Tomlin ever intended his estate should extend into the possessions of either of these gentlemen."

"Nor I, nor I either ever entertained for a minute such an idea," exclaimed Niel, scouting the idea, as it were, concurring with Mr. Greenberry, and making light of the whole matter with a burst of his proverbial laughter. "I knew very well that you wouldn't comply with such a piece of nonsense; but we had to humor her. Shortest mode of getting clear of her, you understand."

"No—it would be a premature act on my part to hazard the property of others, that I hold merely as a guardian, in order to advance any personal design."

"Exactly, exactly. I wholly agree with you," returned

the smootn tongued Niel ; " but we have acted the *farce*, so Mr. Stuyvesant may return and report to the seat of government to their mightinesses. Ha ! ha ! ha ! " concluding with a hearty burst of his accustomed merriment. Niel rose to take leave.

Here his companion commenced rummaging in his capacious hat-crown in a business like manner, amongst his voluminous manuscripts, as if in search of some particular one. Producing a writ of injunction, with his wonted display of official dignity the little self-important man presented it, with a bow, to Mr. Greenberry, saying :

" I am instructed, sir, to make you acquainted with this decree of the Court, enjoining you to exercise no undue acts of ownership, aside from the mere retention of this landed property in question, during the minority of the intended heiress, "

With a low bow, as when a hero has successfully and admirably performed his part, the official dignitary, after this formidable display of ability and learning, prepared for departure.

It may be imagined what a thunder-clap of surprise this sudden announcement was to Mr. Greenberry and his lady.

" What means this injunction ? " he asked, in amazement.

But the consequential sheriff replied, with a grim smile :

" The face of the document will make you acquainted with its contents. "

The puzzled Greenberry turned to Niel with a look that spoke more than words, for an explanation of the mystery. Niel, with all his tact at dissembling, and coolness and skill in conducting a piece of diplomatic knavery, looked guilty and crest fallen.

" What means this, Mr. Riley ? Do you know aught of this strange piece of complicated business ? " inquired Mr. Greenberry earnestly, while he kept his piercing eyes riveted with a penetrating gaze on the face of the quailing Niel.

" Well, Mr. Greenberry, " he commenced, confusedly, " to make the matter short, I must explain this business to you, though with the greatest reluctance I am compelled to reveal

some facts to you which have never come to your knowledge before. I was in hopes that you and Mrs. Darly could have come to a quiet adjustment of this knotty subject, and spared me the inexpressible pain of being the first to put you in possession of the facts concerning the disposal of this estate, in case the heiress intended should not survive."

And Niel proceeded to narrate (though professing a great many regrets the while) the fabricating story relating to the property in case death or accident should debar its falling into the hands of the daughter.

"That the girl's disappearance will ever be accounted for, or she ever recovered," Niel continued, concluding his story, and recovering his self possession, "is hopeless, and more's the pity, for that old woman must, in consequence, fall heir to the property. But zounds! you can keep possession in spite of her till the time designated by the will has expired. Ha! ha! ha!" and an emphatic thump with his constantly-gesticulating hand, on a neighboring bench, with a loud laugh in order to euphonize the matter, wound up the plausible story.

The two worthies took leave hastily, after things had been thus fairly understood by the parties, leaving Mrs. Greenberry in a paroxysm of grief, and her spouse in a fit of excitement and chagrin.

Niel and his official friend had made their exit but a short time ere Pat McCleary, a son of green Erin, appeared in the avenue leading to the mansion, with a back-load of wood-cutter's tools, and holding a conversation to himself, something like the following:

"Och! sorrow be to the day that iver Pat McCleary put brogue on the shores of Ameriky! But what could a man do agin such a houst of nagers. St. Patrick! if I'd had a good shillelah, how I'd made the woolly crathers scratch! Och! but I'd a give a pase of my lifetime for a few of the lads that I used to lade out to the gineral battles at the Glin fares! troth! but it's low days with Pat McCleary, that used to be counted bully of the Glins, when he's compelled to bate a retreat from a gang of nagers! Sorrow be to the

day! if it iver reaches ould Ireland, that Pat McCleary turned his back on an enemy!"

"What's the matter, Pat?" Mr. Greenberry asked, as the Irishman approached near enough for his strange soliloquy to be heard. But Pat, absorbed with his own emotions, paid no regard to, or perhaps did not hear the interrogations of his employer.

"But what single man could stand before sich a dhrove of woolly apes—and without a sufficient shillelah—and lid on by that she divil in petticoats—*what* you call her? Helen Darlin. Och! jabbers, but she's the broth of a darlin."

"Why, what in the world do you mean, McCleary?" Mr. Greenberry, approaching the infuriated Pat, asked with surprise.

"Mam!" said the wrothy son of Erin, throwing down his cutting-tools. "Is it yer honor asks? Sorrow be to the day that Pat McCleary should mane anything but the truth."

"Well, what has happened?"

"Troth! an' isn't there enough happened, when Pat McCleary's compelled to retreat before an enemy."

"Who did you run from?" pursued the confounded Greenberry.

"*Rin!* did yer honor say?" ejaculated Pat, with the most sovereign contempt for the word. "Divil a step did Pat iver rin from a human crather?"

"Well, how then?"

"How thin!—Why, does yer honor understand, that ould limb at the bridge, with her nagurs—*what* d'ye call her?"

"Helen Darly," replied Mr. Greenberry.

"Hel—I, faith, she's well named, but divil the darlin's about her. Well, yer honor's to understand, this angel, with her black marmadons, came swarmin' on me as thick as Pharaoh's locusts with sticks and stones, and guns too, for inny thing I know, and the divil knows what other murther-in' wapons; and, does yer honor see, Pat was compilled to bate a retreat from the place he was cutting wood by yer honor's orders, as he was niver thinkin' o' the like, and had no shillelah prepared."

"Oh well, never mind!" Mr. Greenberry said, having got the Irishman's story at length.

"*Niver mind!* does yer honor say? If the news iver gets to ould Ireland, Saint Patrick! Pat McCleary 'll niver reeover from the disgrace his ould cronies, the boys of the Glins 'll hape upon his name and fame."

"Well, well, there's an injunction laid upon the land, and were not allowed to cut any more. Mr. Greenberry replied.

"Oh! divil take the law; but, by my sowl, I'll have re-venge for this insult out o' that ould hiffer and her black apes, or my name isn't Pat McCleary!"—and the Irishman, shouldering his tools again, strode doggedly away, to chew alone the end of bitter reflection.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Three rogues they were, well met,
To talk of schemes most vile and knavish."

Seated in O'Ferguson Hall was Mrs. Daryl, with a number of musty volumes strewn over a table that stood before her, through the pages of which she was looking, as if in search of some particular passage. Their thick leather bindings and fuzzed edges designated them to be law books; and, having at length discovered the desired passage, she pushed the rest of the volumes aside, and commenced perusing an "act" in the one she had selected.

Her slovenly attire consisted of a faded dimity gown and an old, tattered dress handkerchief, tied negligently about her neck. Her long black hair, with which was mingled a few strands of gray, discoverable only on a close examination, was twisted round a comb, that secured it in a bunch or knot at the back of her head. Her countenance was of an austere cast and sinister expression, with gray eyes, sunk deep in their sockets, while the muscles of her face drew her brows

into a severe expression, and contracted the corners of the eyelids into small wrinkles, giving her orbs a penetrating and angry look. Her nose, as if to complete this hard countenance, was large for that of a female, with a hairy wart on one side of it. She was of an uncommonly tall and commanding stature, for a woman, and her gait, the most unfeminine, was a firm, long, and rapid stride.

Playing about through the room, on the bare, broken floor, where Mrs. Darly was seated, amongst a motley collection of cats, dogs, poultry and pigs that entered one door as they desired, and passed out of the other at their leisure, were the two twin children, Timon and Christianna. But what a contrast in physiognomy was there between the two children! The boy, a thick, fat, coarse lubberly urchin, with dim muddy, fireless eyes; while his sister was of spare and delicate form, with a soft clear, white skin, and meeting blue eyes. So wide a difference is seldom met with in persons of the same family. The boy, after hauling his sister about for a while, like one of his pet dogs, finished his impish amusement by pushing the little girl over so violently on the floor as to make her scream out with pain.

Mrs. Darly, roused from her book by the cries of the child, turned her head and exclaimed:

"Timon, what are you doing to Christianna? Nina," she continued, in a louder tone, calling the old servant, "come here and attend to the children; what are you poking about, all the time in that kitchen?"

The old negress appeared, in a wrathful mood at seeing her favorite so illy treated, muttering to herself, as was her custom:

"Dat's one cused, etanal bad boy; you mammy ought to spank you well fo' hurtin' your little sister. Dod! an' she don't look like any kin to you. Come hea, honey; come hea, till I take you away fro' dat great buffle-head."

And the old woman caught the child—who extended her hands to her, as to a favorite—up in her arms, and, wiping the tears from her bright blue eyes, begged the girl away

to let alone the kitchen, murthering it her wonted manner at the refresh.

Niel and his companion, the sheriff, now entered, and Mrs. Darly, closing her quarto volume, with a smile rose to meet them.

"Gentlemen, take seats—how did you make out?"

"Ha! ha! ha!—*make out?*—we always make out well," said Niel, laughing.

It was Mrs. Darly's turn now to laugh, which she did with a loud, hoarse "haw! h-a-w!" "And did you frighten cousin Greenberry into compliance with our wishes?"

"We can't give you an explicit answer this hot day," Niel replied, wiping his forehead, and, with a sinister smile, nodding to the self-important sheriff, "until we have our ideas collected with a drink of brandy—ha! ha! ha! Set out your decanter, Mrs. Darly; we're as dry as fish."

The hostess placed a decanter on the table with a—

"Gentlemen help yourselves; and let me hear the substance of your expedition as soon as possible."

"Here's health to the O'Ferguson cause!" said Niel, pouring out a glass of the liquor, and emptying it at a couple of swallows. "Help yourself, Mr. Stuyvesant, help yourself—delightful and refreshing this hot day!"

The officer threw a lump of sugar in the glass added a little water to dissolve it, took the glass between his finger and thumb, held it up to the light, peered through it—then added a little brandy, and held it up again to examine its color—re-placed it on the table, poured a drop more into the glass, and turned, with a face radiant with smiles, to reply to Niel, who was recounting facetious anecdotes, for the edification of the sheriff, to the great perplexity of Mrs. Darly, who was all impatience to hear how they had succeeded with Greenberry. The official worth next walked to the mirror, stroked up his fine whiskers, and adjusted his cravat; then, returning to the table, took his glass, and, with a nod to the hostess, swallowed its contents. Niel still continued his jesting and laughter, till Mrs. Darly, whose

patience was worn completely out by his witticisms, broke in upon the facetious humorist with :

"Mr. Riley, are you never going to get done talking nonsense? Do let me know what success Mr. Stuyvesant and you had!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" was the commencement of Niel's reply; "we had all sorts of success. I appeal to Mr. Stuyvesant for confirmation."

"Succeeded admirably—admirably, I assure you, madam," said the sheriff.

"Then let me know how admirably you succeeded."

"Give us time to collect our ideas, Mrs. Darly, and regale ourselves with this refreshing beverage—ha! ha! ha!" Niel added, "and we'll be able to give you the whole story in detail."

"Never mind the details," the impatient lady persisted; "let me hear the substance of it."

"The whole affair is too good to lose an iota of it, isn't it, Mr. Stuyvesant!" the intolerable Niel continued, replacing his empty glass for the third time on the board.

"Excellent, excellent!" replied the smiling sheriff, as he poured another glass of brandy and water down his throat.

"Mrs. Darly's exhausted patience was, by this time, converted into a preternatural fit of rage, and she fell to kicking out the dogs that were sprawled about in every corner of the room.

"Get out of the house, you filthy brutes, and find a bed elsewhere; confound you, you'd better take possession; away with ye—out with ye—begone."

In a short time the house was cleared of yelping curs and bawling hounds, and Mrs. Darly again resumed her seat, anxiously to await the disclosures of Neil and the sheriff, who having gorged themselves well with brandy, reared back at length in their chairs with the importance of hotel-lords, and commenced giving Mrs. Darly an account of their success.

"Well, we've seen your cousin Greenberry, ha! ha!

ha!" Niel commenced; "your cousin, I say ha! ha! ha!"

"Well, what out did you make!"

"*Out!* ha! ha! ha! Greenberry's too old a bird to be caught with chaff, isn't he, Mr. Stuyvesant?"

"A pretty shrewd chap, that Greenberry," replied the sheriff.

"Well," resumed Niel, "we tried to persuade him to give a deed of trust, but all to no purpose; and Mr. Stuyvesant was compelled at length, to make him acquainted with the injunction. Heavens! how thunderstruck he was when the sheriff presented *that*, and gave him an account of the whole affair! The old lady shed tears at the very sight of the writ."

"He might have known that would be the consequence of his *dev-il-ish* assumption and encroachment. And is that all?" inquired Mrs. Darly, after giving vent to her exultation.

"That's the story," replied Niel.

"We'll have to proceed in a slow and lawful manner in future," said the hag, "since Greenberry has proved invulnerable to covered approaches. We may calculate on your friendship, Mr. Stuyvesant? A friend at *court*, is very convenient."

"Certainly, certainly, madam," replied the officer; "you may class me among your warmest supporters. A friend at *court*, madam, is a very desirable acquisition."

And, with sundry grimaces, nods, bows, and becks, the little self-important officer concluded his speech; and, with a parting glass, the conference broke up.

CHAPTER IX.

"Time—I, that please some, try all—both joy and terror
Of good and bad that make and unfold error—
Now take upon me, in the name of Time,
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime
To me or my swift passage that I slide
O'er sixteen years, and leave the growth untried,
Of that wide gap."—*Shakspeare.*

Again, with that infirmity peculiar to story-tellers, we intrude upon the privacy of the Greenberry's, in then, what has now become, an old homestead. The ever pleasing ceremony of dining (to those who deserve their bread especially) had been performed, and the old gentleman was taking a turn on the piazza of the mansion, for exercise. His once brown locks were now silvered over with the harbingers of approaching age, and care had left its impress in the deeply traced lines that marked his brow and withering cheeks. Those characters, which time may heighten, but not efface, too plainly reveal the sleepless nights; the long hours of conflicting thoughts, and deep and painful meditation, that torture the inward man on the terrible rack of hope, fear, doubt and uncertainty.

In the hall where the different members of that numerous family, gliding back and forward, to and fro; but the most remarkable was a young man, tall and slender in form, with handsome and lively features. His dark, chestnut hair, combed in thick, short ringlets about his neck and marble forehead, that, by its whiteness, strangely contrasted with the bronzed cheek and other parts of his face, to which exposure to a more tropical clime had given a deep Castilian tinge, through which, however, the mantling blush of life and health diffused its ruddy glow. His ever

restless, dark, hazel eye had a quick, penetrating glance that nothing escaped; and his dark, pointed whiskers, detracting something from his youthful appearance, gave to young Ernest Greenberry—for he it was—a more manly, striking and chivalrous air, than his mild, soft and placid mein, without this military device, would naturally have possessed.

And such was Ernest Greenberry, with all the tender sensibility, with all the high-toned pride of the gallant cavalier. At the early age of ten, his uncle, who resided in Provence, and whose name little Ernest bore, insisted on taking the youth under his care and training; and the doting mother, though loth to part with her fond boy, yielded, at length, to his kinsman's solicitations. His uncle being rich and heirless, young Ernest was indulged in all his taste for the classic lore of the old world. Accompanied by his tutor, he made the tour of Europe—saw the imperial city in her decayed splendor, and classic Athens in her ruins. But still the speaking relics of former grandeur, of power and greatness, are there, in those crumbling monuments of man's power and industry, of his degradation and effeminacy, calling the mediator back to Greece in her pristine glory, and Rome in her imperial greatness. But if the power and triumph of man have rose up like a bright flame that blazed for a while in its resplendent glory, then sinking away, left the black trace of ruin in its rear, the loneliness, the glory, the charms of Nature still shine forth in all the enchanting magnificence of imperative beauty. There the air is balm, and the very atmosphere infuses love. In those climes, where every stream is embalmed, as it were, in immortal song; where every steep, and tower, and tree is a speaking remembrance of those who cannot die; and every plain and valley has been lists for the tourney, where chivalry tilted for the smiles of love—or the battle-field, where heroes strove for a crown.

Having ripened into manhood beneath the tropical rays of the old world, he turned his face once more toward the home of his infancy, and arrived among kindred and

friends just at the momentous crisis when the affairs of his family were beginning to assume an aspect of intense interest and anxiety.

The time had now arrived which should have terminated the guardianship of Mr. Greenberry over the person and property of Rose Tomlin, placing the estate of her father under her own care and management, had not her mysterious disappearance changed the condition of affairs. The disposal of the property must, therefore, under the present complexed circumstances, be settled by a decision of the court. Helen Darley, now better known by the appellation of the "Hag of the Wallowish," claimed an alliance with John James Tomlin; though, as the reader may remember, a step more remote than Mr. Greenberry, her father being, as the latter gentleman, a second cousin to the father of Rose. This spirit of trouble and discontent, however, who lived but in the atmosphere of contention, unable or unwilling to await the tardy progress of time, had filled up the intervening space between the disappearance of the intended heir and the period which should have placed the property in her own hands, with a kind of Tartar-like warfare on all around her. Not content with shackling the control of Mr. Greenberry over the Tomlin estate by injunction, and bringing an impending action against Fletcher and Dinby, to be prosecuted when she became heir *de facto*, if such should ever come to pass, this genius of strife whiled away the tediousness of life, by a constant kind of predatory warfare on all around her. On some futile pretext, placing impediments in a neighbor's way; again, with more malicious purposes, killing another's hog, or maiming a third's cattle—never meeting a disputed point boldly, but, by a fiendish delight, taking advantage of every circumstance to work ruin to all within her reach. A true Ishmaelite in every respect save in Mahomedan creed, and perhaps, a slight difference in color, her hand, in the language of scripture, was against every man; and by her unwearied exertions to work evil, with or without pretence, she had acquired the cognomen of "Hag of the Wallowish." What was to others as a dungeon and char

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nel house, was to her the breath of life and pleasure, if a soul governed by malice and envy can taste aught of enjoyment by giving rein to its fiendish aspirations.

But time, that tries all things, had at length brought to maturity the dissensions wrought by the hag, as far as her influence extended. The particles of strife, if I may so speak, which had emanated from her dark bosom, and spread abroad through the community, like vapor from the sea, that ascends and mingles with the atmosphere, were now fast collecting into one black thunder-cloud, as the mist ere it returns to the bosom of the deep.

The tempest of revenge and malice must soon burst, with all its violence, on those against whom it was directed, or pour upon the devoted head whence it rose.

Mrs. Darley affected to rejoice at the approach of that which she could no longer defer, nor failed to bruit loudly her unquestionable chances and certainty of success. With Niel and Davy's strong and undeniable testimony, she vaunted the triumph which awaited her—the ousting of Greenberry, and the overthrow of the stubborn and unyielding objects of her vengeance, Fletcher and Dinly.

The lightnings of the storm were in the hands of her who never knew mercy, and the fast approaching hour was anxiously awaited, when bolts of destruction should be hurled among her self-made enemies with fearful effect.

The aspect of affairs, indeed, looked gloomy, and Greenberry could not but view it with apprehension and concern. The reported verbal bequest of Tomlin, which was so loudly and vauntingly bruited by the “hag,” and her consorts, he had no doubt was a grand piece of knavery to the bottom; but how could he refute it? Ah, there was the fearful rub!

But the time was fast approaching which would dispel the uncertainty, and bring peace and ruin on the contending parties. Witnesses and jurymen were being summoned; lawyers were consulting their musty volumes, seeking abstruse points and vantage ground against their opponents, and parties making every preparation that might aid a favorable issue at the coming contest.

CHAPTER X.

"The constable, with a mighty watch, is at the door."

"Botheration! Masther Earnest, but she's an ould heifer!" said a well known voice, which we recognized as that of Pat McCleary. "I have some ould scores to settle with that limb o' the divil before I die."

"Ah," returned Ernest, as he paced the floor with his hands thrust carelessly into his pockets, and maintained a miscellaneous conversation with the several members of the family, in a pleasant and flippant vein, "has this terror of the present valiant age, an old lady, not suffered you to escape unscathed, Mr. McCleary?"

"Troth, Masther Ernest, an' I'll not agree she's just a leddy, as your honor spakes it. By my soul, she bears herself more like ould Scratch himself in petticoats, than a crather of the human species!"

"Pshaw, pshaw, Mr. McCleary, you've got prejudiced against Mrs. Darly," Ernest persisted, smiling at the odium the Irishman seemed to entertain for the lady.

"Oh, Pat," put in a pert little girl, who had been listening to the discourse for some time with ill-suppressed mirth, "you needn't attempt weaning over brother Ernest to your interest. He is always at variance with his friends, at any rate, for the sake of opposition, and, when he sees the pretty daughter, I'm sure he'll form a league 'offensive and defensive' with Mrs. Darly."

"By St. Pathrick! the daughter's a jewel for such an ould crab-stick to possess," replied Pat.

"I should like most exceedingly to see this fair dulcinea, whose beauty Fame has so trumpeted abroad," Ernest said, stopping in the middle of the floor, and turning towards

the speakers. "This little simple country maid must be considered by you home-reared simpletons a kind of modern Cleopatra in beauty."

"Egypt's Queen was never half so pretty, I think," said the girl.

"Pshaw, Mary, you've turned connoisseur in female beauty," replied the brother, "and I am beginning to doubt the incomparable charms of this Venus of the Wallowish, when I hear ladies sound her praise so highly. They are apt to envy perfection in their own sex rather than admire it."

"Troth, when yer honor sees the jewel, ye'll be afther sayin' the same thing," added Pat, "but the lass is the only ornament the ould shanty can boast of, an' she's more like an angel than a crather of this troublesome earth."

"Well, I must try to catch a glimpse of this *pigmy*, and then she'll prove *pigmy* enough in beauty, I have no doubt," Ernest replied, half musingly, with a smile, as he resumed his promenade.

A vehement conversation without now attracted the attention of the parties.

"Well, sir, this day an insult has been offered to the dignity of the law, unprecedented in the annals of our government—yes, sir, unexampled by anything on record!"

"Why, Mr. Stuyvesant," for the first speaker was no less a personage than our old friend, the dapper little sheriff, "what has happened?" Mr. Greenberry asked, in some surprise at the demeanor of the excited officer.

"Sir, have not I, bearing the broad insignia of the State, and executing its edicts with a scrupulous and impartial justice, been maimed, maltreated and repulsed by violent and offensive means, while in the execution of my trust, the fulfilment of my obligations, and the pursuit of my bounden duty—and, through its faithful servant, has not the majesty of the law been wantonly outraged and insulted, sir?" pursued this worthy of the law, waxing warmer as he proceeded.

"Who has assaulted you, Mr. Stuyvesant, and denied your authority?" Greenberry inquired.

"Why, sir, in the fulfilment of my duty, in serving a warrant on the persons of Mrs. Helen Darly, her husband, and son, Simon Darly, together with all aiders and abettors in the indiscriminate and wanton slaughter of Thomas Fletcher's stock, I have been assaulted by that lady and her associates in a wanton and outrageous manner."

"Ah, is it possible!" said Mr. Greenberry, with a smile, when the little sheriff had left off this ebullition of his ire; "and you and she have come to a rupture at last? Why, you used to be as confiding as pickpockets, and then she was reported as one of the finest women in the world! Strange such a breach between old friends should have happened so suddenly!"

The cool and indifferent manner in which Mr. Greenberry viewed this heinous outrage of the law, in the officer's opinion, was to Stuyvesant's wounded pride, like a lash laid upon old sores. His towering passion rose to such a pitch as effectually to overpower the little dignitary, and it was some minutes before he was able to give vent in words to the whirlwind of excitement that racked his soul.

Mrs. Darly had so captivated the confidence of the little sheriff, by playing to his whims and flattering his vanity, that he had talked of her as one of the finest women beneath the sun, to the disparagement of all her enemies—whose name was legion—being every peaceably-inclined person, whose fate or fortune offered this evil spirit an opportunity of picking a quarrel with. Mr. Greenberry, as a matter of course, came in for a large share of this virulence, so industriously circulated by the hag and her machinators, and the august sheriff, not being altogether scot free of this dirty work, Henry Greenberry, in spite of his better judgment, felt not a little amused and avenged by the chastening and well-merited flagellating—to use no harsher term—this termagant had given the public functionary.

This little great man at length having recovered his

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equilibrium of temper, in some measure, resumed the denunciations in his wonted florid style.

"Sir, in pursuance of my duty under the obligation of my oath of office, I know *no* friends. Sir, a strict conformity to the letter of the law has, regardless of personal consequences, ever been my invariable method of transacting business, during my capacity of a public servant; and the enormity of the outrage, in the present instance, precedes any future event of the kind that has ever come within the range of my observation. A less heinous offence, sir, against the constitution and sovereign people of England brought Charles Stuart to the block. A crime of far less magnitude dethroned and beheaded Louis of France! Sir, if such insults to the majesty of the law, if such wanton outrages against the honor and dignity of the State are regarded as matters of indifference, what, sir, must be the inevitable and awful consequences? What, sir, has harbingered the downfall of future kingdoms and republics that have passed away but the disregard of law and order? But, sir, this affair shall not end here. By the majesty of the State, and my sacred oath of office, this first attempted defilement of the law shall be made an example and fearful warning to all law-breakers henceforth. I am now summoning a posse to take into custody this scoffer of law and justice, despite her and her minions: and ere I bate one jot of my lawful prosecution of this flagrant insult to the public, Mrs. Darley, with all those concerned in the rebellion, shall be arraigned before a tribunal of her peers, there to be tried and adjudged for the expiation of her unparalleled offence against law and order."

Thus ending his bubble harangue, the valiant sheriff drew a pistol from his pocket and deposited it on a bench beside him, with a hard slap, looking round at the same time to see the effect it had upon the company.

Ernest picked up the weapon, examined it, and said:

"Why, Mr. Stuyvesant, you have lost your flint."

"Ah, sir, that accounts for its missing fire when I attempted to enforce the law, even at the risk of bloodshed.

I hadn't perceived the cause of its failure till you discovered it, sir. We'll have it replenished with a new flint," replied the little sheriff.

Ernest next attempted to cock the piece, but perceiving the main-spring was broke, he said :

"Mr. Stuyvesant, there appears to be something the matter with the inside works of the lock. I believe the main-spring is broken."

"Ah, sir, is it possible?" exclaimed the official worthy. "That has been caused by some of the missiles thrown at my person coming in contact with the weapon, and fully explains the cause of its having failed to perform its office when I was beset by the minions of outrage and violence. Had it not been for this accident, the affair of this morning might have had a more tragic conclusion."

Ernest, on investigating the pistol further, discovered that it was entirely empty.

"Sir," said he, "I believe you have forgot to charge your firearms," with some difficulty suppressing the laugh which he felt very much inclined to break into at the puzzled countenance of the little sheriff, on the announcement of this discovery.

"Well, sir—yes," he replied, turning again to Mr. Greenberry, and resuming the conversation to hide his confusion, where Ernest had interrupted it. "Yes, sir, I am now summoning a posse."

"And by St. Pathrick! Mr. Stuyvesant," said the son of Erin, speaking up very seasonably to relieve the confused officer, "Pat McCleary'll volunteer to help take the ould witch in her den."

"And shall I be permitted the pleasure of enrolling myself under your patriotic banner?" Ernest asked, with ill-suppressed mirth, in consequence of the ludicrous display the officer was making of his powers of elocution, being always ready for any break-neck scrape, and eager to avail himself of the present opportunity of catching a glimpse of Mrs. Darley's fair daughter, concerning whose matchless beauty he had heard so much.

"With the greatest of pleasure," the dapper little sheriff

replied, making a low bow to Ernest, and describing the wonted circle with his hat, which was his custom when the occasion, as in the present instance, called forth the greatest display of the officer's good breeding. "We will be exceedingly gratified to have the honor of your company on the present occasion. I admire your praiseworthy devotion, gentlemen," continued the diminutive functionary, "to the cause of law and order. And I shall accept your proffered aid the more readily on account of its being tendered in so magnanimous a manner."

As it is altogether a matter of impossibility for the reader to form a just idea between the hag and the officer by the pedantic volubility of the latter, I will premise a brief synopsis of the affair, that he or she may better understand the drift of our story.

The doughty Stuyvesant, it appears, had presented himself before Mrs. Darly's domicile, and with that wonted display of authority so peculiar to this worthy, summoned the beldame to appear, which she did, with her accustomed smile of deception and honeyed greeting, notwithstanding she had just risen from a wrangle with Niel respecting the latter's testimony in the approaching lawsuit, which the two had been discussing over a bowl of Niel's favorite toddy.

"Mr. Stuyvesant, do alight and come into the house. I can't express my delight to see you."

This very winning request, however, the gallant sheriff thought fit to decline, with one of his most ostentatious displays of etiquette, acquainting the matron at the same time with the nature of his business.

"Let me see the warrant, Mr. Stuyvesant, if you please," said the hag, extending her hand towards the sheriff, who placed the writ in it.

Glancing over the paper with flashing eyes, in an instant she tore it into a thousand pieces, and seizing an angle-rod that lay close by, measured the bony sides of the poor sheriff's poorer steed, till the sturdy strokes reverberated in sullen echoes from the neighboring cliffs; and raising at the same time a "hark! hillaloo!" a pack of baying

hounds, barking curs, and yelping puppies, came bounding from every cranny of the old mansion around the frightened sheriff and his anatomical horse.

The old creature that had stood Mrs. Darly's violent onset with the most stoical indifference, now, however, began to show its latent mettle when the canine gang, cheered on by Helen, came yelping and snapping at the animal's heels. Pricking up its heels like a courser on the turf, the old beast bounded off at a hard gallop. The terrified sheriff resigned the rein for a more secure hold of the mane, while his bell-crown, with the valuable documents it contained, came within an ace of going with the first gust of wind among the hungry dogs. The retreating limb of the law roared out in a disjointed, interjectional manner:

"For God's sake, Mrs. Darly! Wo! wo! Get out, you brutes! Murder!" &c., but the flying sheriff was only answered by the yelping dogs and boisterous mirth of the yelling negroes, who had by this time collected about their mistress, and assisted the poor sheriff's retreat by their wild yells of delight and showers of stones which they sent after him. And then, with his horse in a foam and himself in a fury, he arrived at the mansion of Henry Greenberry.

Followed by Ernest and McCleary, the defeated officer jogged moodily along on his skeleton horse, brooding over the late insult put upon his dignity, and meditating vengeance against the hag, summoning into his posse every person he met on the way, till his company amounted to some dozen or more rustics, who willingly followed on, eager for the anticipated sport, when they had learned the particulars of the affair from Pat.

"Faith," said the Irishman, addressing the company as they drew in sight of O'Ferguson Hall, "ye had better be gettin' your shillelahs ready, boys," and twirling his own stout cudgel around his fingers with a rotary motion till it whistled through the air, shouted: "Arrah! boys, but I'll make some of them woolly-pated Africans ring, and square up ould accounts with the witch of Endor!"

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Pat's war speech, however, created only a shout of laughter from the crowd, as they trudged on after their valiant captain, the redoubted Stuyvesant, till within a hundred yards of the point against which their enterprise was directed. Then drawing up his men in battle array, the little sheriff made a fiery appeal to their patriotism, urging the necessity of sustaining him in the approaching crisis, and through him the honor and dignity of the State.

The doughty sheriff, as he drew near the scene of action, like an able and prudent general, began to fall in the rear of his guard, so that when they arrived at the place of destination, Ernest, whose thoughts were more actively engaged in forming an ideal goddess, to compare in some measure with the maiden of whose beauty he had heard so much, than in meditating anything serious, found himself in front of the band, and McCleary stalking close by his side, with a prodigious cudgel in his fist. Casting a look behind, he perceived the valiant sheriff driving up the rear, doubtless to prevent the escape of deserters, if any one's courage should ooze out as he came into the contest.

The company was now brought to a halt, and Ernest departed to convey a summons of surrender to Mrs. Darly, from the authority of the State. Eager to take a more minute survey of the premises, he readily bore the message of the sheriff to the old lady, who soon appeared and accosted the officer in her blindest mood.

"Mr. Stuyvesant," said the hag, "I am delighted to learn that you have escaped unhurt. I felt the greatest concern lest that wild horse had thrown you, and broken some of your bones! Why do you ride such a scary animal? I wonder some accident doesn't happen you!"

"Madam," said the angry sheriff, interrupting the old lady in the middle of her sympathizing speech, "do you intend adding insult to injury? Have you not, madam, resorted to violent measures to oppose the law? Have I not been maltreated by you and your minions, while in the fulfillment of my official duties, madam?"

"Mr. Stuyvesant, you are crazy!" exclaimed the hag, with affected surprise. "In place of offering you any insult, we used every effort to rescue you from the imminent danger which threatened your life, when that skittish horse took fright at the dogs and run away!"

This stout denial on the part of Mrs. Darly began to confuse the worthy officer's ideas, and shake his faith in the unerring susceptibility of his organs of vision.

Perceiving the impression her bold assertions were making on the confounded sheriff, she followed up her advantage.

"Mr. Stuyvesant, didn't you perceive with your own eyes that I endeavored to beat the confounded brutes off myself, and summoned the black fellows to aid you as soon as possible; but I'm glad to find that nothing serious has happened you, for I assure you I felt very uneasy!"

The valorous sheriff having but a very confused idea of the true state of the fray, his senses being so flurried by the yelping pack which beset him, that he began to admit the plausibility of what the beldame urged, never having doubted her word before. He consequently looked very dubiously at the ground, the welts on the side of his lean charger, at Mrs. Darley, who still continued to greet him with a smile, and at the bevy of rustics he had summoned to capture his former highly esteemed friend. As may be imagined, the little sheriff began to have a very perceptible idea of his ludicrous position, when, by accident, he bethought himself of Fletcher's warrant, and inquired of the hag what she had done with it.

"I didn't see any warrant, Mr. Stuyvesant. You've been dreaming, man! That wild race-horse has so confused your ideas that you can't remember what you were about! Do alight and come in till you are a little refreshed and collected."

The sheriff searched his hat-crown and pockets, and looked mysterious, but could discover the warrant in requisition nowhere among his voluminous documents. He paused thoughtfully for a moment, cast his eyes about con-

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fusedly, and shook his head dubiously; then, recollecting himself, declined Mrs. Darly's pressing invitation, and reining up his anatomical steed, rode away "with a flea in his ear."

CHAPTER XI.

"And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
With finer form or lovelier face."—*Scott*.

With a good deal of curiosity, Ernest entered the uncouth apartment where Mrs. Darly was seated on an old arm-chair, conning over a musty volume of Blackstone. The hag raised her eyes above her round-glassed, antiquated spectacles, and returned the young man's salutations, fixing, at the same time, a scrutinizing gaze on his person, as he obeyed the request to be seated. In all his rambles, Ernest thought he had never beheld so curious an object of the feminine species as the Hag of the Wallowish. Her tall, commanding, masculine frame, slovenly attired in a loose, dirty habit—her long, grizzled locks—her wrinkled visage, and cheeks pinched inward, aided by her dark, forbidding look, and squeaking, shrill voice, when not modified into those soft and liquid sounds, which long practice in hypocritical cant had enabled her to assume—was in perfect harmony with all else around.

Ernest made her acquainted with the purport of his mission with as little ceremony as possible, for he felt it difficult to approach her with his accustomed ease and familiarity.

She rose hastily from her seat, when informed of the officer's message, and tossing the ponderous volume aside, gave a loud scream for Christianna, who instantly presented herself from an adjoining apartment.

"Keep the young gentleman company, Christianna, while I attend to Mr. Stuyvesant," the matron said hastily, as she quitted the room.

Peculiar sight! Strange situation! Ernest found himself in a moment relieved from the odious presence of the old woman, who was reinstated by a maiden of the most exquisite form and loveliness. His romantic wish was now gratified, and that famed beauty, of whom he had heard so much, stood before him in all her retiring modesty. At a glance he confessed that Fame this time had at least been niggard of her praises. The maiden's form had attained the *embonpoint* of womanly perfection—was perfect in its symmetry, and of the medium size. Her hair would have been auburn but for the golden glow that mellowed it to the rich, indescribable hue so rarely seen, and the voluptuous curls rolled in silky ringlets down her snowy neck. Her breast, proudly swelling and gently heaving in its respirations, and the unexpected presence of a stranger, so young and chivalrous in bearing, produced that slight and natural confusion peculiar to maiden sensibility—deepening the damask blush that mantled her cheek beneath a skin of transparent whiteness. But her deep blue eyes were the heaven of love, and shaded by their dark, long lashes, they had a melting tenderness about them which shed a soft and melancholy expression over her striking beauty. Her curtsey and musical voice, as she returned Ernest's greeting, discovered the ease and natural grace of the maiden, harmonizing with all her other attractions.

Perhaps it was the sudden shifting of the scene, and the remarkable contrast between the repulsive harshness of the matron and captivating charms of the maiden, which robbed Ernest of his wonted ease for a moment, when the fair vision burst upon his view, for he was no stranger to the most choice productions of female beauty, both by nature and art. But all that the artist could execute, and more than the painter express, Nature had bestowed on Christianna, and the spirit of immortality, which no art may equal, wrought out every line and lineament to living perfection.

Ernest gradually drew his fair companion into conversation, and found her possessed of much good sense, and a

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natural delicacy of taste—the latter, however, is a constant dependent on the former endowment.

“I perceive you have a good many poetical works, Miss Darly,” he said, taking up a volume of poems, when the general topics of conversation had become exhausted; “and I opine you are the principal reader.”

The girl smiled at this compliment to her taste, and answered:

“Yes, sir, I love to peruse works of imagination, sometimes.”

“Who is your favorite bard?” said Ernest.

“I fear, sir, you will think me an oddity in letters, as I am unable to name any exclusive favorite, but cull from amongst all to suit my own poor taste,” was the maiden’s modest reply.

“Your home has been fortunately pitched among the wild and striking scenery for giving zest to the dreamy pleasures of the imagination,” Ernest continued, looking out on the wild hills that stretched their blue tops away to the westward.

“Yes,” Christianna replied, gaining ease and confidence as she became interested, “there is a delightful prospect from the cliffs above, and a pleasant seat on the mossy rocks that I often retire to, to catch a glimpse of the surrounding country. Everything looks so beautiful and variegated in the distance! I wish you could enjoy the sight once—I think you would admire the prospect very much.”

“I am persuaded I would enjoy it very much,” added Ernest; “especially if the fair discoverer were by to point out the beauties of the scene.”

The young lady blushed at this pointed allusion of Ernest’s gallantry, but replied:

“Oh, I am quite sure there is always enough presents itself to the eye of beauty to feast admiration till the gaze grows weary.”

But as Ernest was getting fairly afloat on the sea of sentiment with this lovely Naiad, Mrs. Darly entered the room

like a dark apparition of reality, dispelling all the romantic aspirations of the young couple in an instant.

"What has brought that old harpy so soon back again?" Ernest mentally ejaculated, but he did not give utterance to his thoughts, and Mrs. Darly was the first to break silence.

"And this is young Mr. Greenberry! I could see no family resemblance in you, and would never have recognized you as a son of Henry Greenberry, had I not been apprised of the fact by one of the gentlemen outside. I hope you may be as little like him in other respects as you are in features, and perhaps honest people may get leave to maintain their peaceable rights, and not be forced into vexatious lawsuits to prevent rascals from plundering us of all we have."

"Are my comrades gone?" Ernest asked, confused and incensed at the coarse and ungentle speech, not deigning a reply to so uncivil a salutation.

"I know nothing about your companions," she replied, with harsh indifference.

Ernest donned his hat, and making short ceremony of leave-taking, was soon out of reach of the vilifying tongue of this termagant.

CHAPTER XII.

"Think not I am what I appear."—*Selim.*

After sitting some time in silence, subsequent to Ernest's departure, the girl, looking up at Mrs. Darly's dark brow, said, timidly:

"Mother, who was that young gentleman?"

"Haven't I told you often not to call me mother any more?" said the hag, angrily. "I am not your mother, child. I don't know anything about the young 'scape-grace. I heard some of the rascally gang call him Ernest Greenberry."

"He's a fine looking young gentleman," returned the maiden, after a considerable pause.

"Christianna, I almost despair of your ever being able to estimate real worth. You are delighted, I suppose, with that young coxcomb, who has been strolling over Europe all his life, looking at old ruins, at his uncle's expense, and has now returned to America, puffed up with conceit, to idle away the rest of his days at some one else's cost."

"I don't pretend to know anything about his real merits, mother, she would have added, but recollecting herself, and catching the fiery eye of the old hag, she stopped short at the first syllable, and after a pause, continued confusedly, "but I merely remarked he is a fine looking gentleman. What is his profession?"

"I can't tell you, child—to lounge about, most likely," said Mrs. Darley. "But to my thinking, he'll have to soil his white hands when the lawsuit is ended, and the property, which that gang of rogues have been living on so long, will fall into the hands of its proper owners."

Christianna made no reply, but plied her needle briskly, in silence, intent upon what she was sewing. After this speech, the hag, too, sat musing some time in silence, and gazing alternately on the girl and on the old volume she had resumed. At length she commenced the conversation again.

"Well, Christianna, I suppose you have made up your mind fully, by this time, about the propriety of that affair you asked time to consider?"

The maiden kept her eyes still riveted on her work, remaining silent, but her breast heaved violently, and the crimson flood rushed over her neck and brow.

"Your foolish notions about Timon's appearing as a brother to you are all nonsense," the hag continued.

"But having all my life, till recently, considered him as such, I can't support the idea of"—said the maiden, stopping short in the midst of her speech.

"Of what?" asked the hag, after pausing for the maiden to finish her sentence. "What foolish, romantic notions

you possess, and they all arise from reading those drivelling works of fiction, which I procured in order to wean Timon from following his infernal hounds, and turn his thoughts on something else. You must aspire to something very great, when you refuse a farm and a husband."

"But, indeed, I can never love Timon enough to—to—he appears so like my own brother," the girl replied, with pain and confusion almost overpowering her senses.

"What foolish notions you have imbibed! Haven't you been told a thousand times he is not your brother?"

The hag still persisted more harshly, and growing angry at what she considered overweening delicacy or downright intractableness.

"Well, I do long to know something about who I really am. Have you no idea, madam, of whom my parents or friends are, or were?" Christianna said, endeavoring to escape from the painful topic by a desperate effort to turn the conversation into another channel, but in vain.

"What a vain curiosity you have," returned the old woman. "What would it avail if I were able to impart the desired information? Think your friends would own you, when they left you at another's door, to be taken care of by strangers? But what should occupy your thoughts at present is not the past, but the future. The property that Greenberry, the villain, has been endeavoring to keep in his possession, will soon be wrung from his knavish hands, and pass into those of its rightful owners; and then it has been our intention, always, of conferring it on you and Timon, when you might call me mother with propriety. When that happy day shall arrive—and it remains with yourself to bring it as speedily as possible—you shall learn all about your birth, and who your friends were."

"Oh! Heaven! will you still insist on such a sacrifice?" said the maiden at last bursting into tears. "I am sure Timon does not want me, and I cannot force myself to view him in any other light than that of a brother. As I have lived, still permit me to remain—without kindred or friends—and as my infancy is veiled in mystery, so let me die—unknown and unlamented. The accumulation of

wealth cannot reconcile a situation. I fear to contemplate, nor conceal the dependence (a sense of which must ever depress my spirit) of being raised to honor by the charity of others, without meriting it."

This half beseeching request and half stubborn declaration of the girl, threw the chafed hag into a still more violent paroxysm of rage, and she stormed a perfect tornado of passion, upbraiding the weeping maiden for her ingratitude and folly.

Christianna left the room in tears, and sought her only consoler, Nina, who was enjoying the luxury of the summer breeze, and regaling herself with her pipe, beneath a shady tree in the garden.

"Gor'-a mighty, honey—what's de matter?" asked the old woman, soothingly. "Has missis been a scoldin' at ye agin? Poor child! she hab no peace about dis house," Nina continued, talking rather to herself than to the girl.

"Oh, Nina, my life has become wretched of late," said Christianna. "Left in a mist of error concerning my genealogy, I have been forced to resign the idea that Helen Darly is my mother, and am constantly annoyed with importunities to unite my fortune with Timon—at the very thought of which my soul revolts. Can you tell me anything about my birth?"

"Ah, me! honey, it's hard for ole Nina to know, for she always thought you de twin sister ob massa Tim, till missis tole us all dat you were not her darter. Ah, well! honey, dem dat lib longest 'll see de most. Dere's something not right about dis ole house."

"Why, Nina—why do you say so?" inquired the girl.

"Ah, me! honey, dese old eyes and ears hab seed an' heard t'ings about dis place, dat would frighten you, child, to hear told," replied the old woman.

"Oh, no, they will not, Nina. Do tell me what mystery hangs over my life, if you know," said Christianna, anxiously.

"Do you see dat mound, child, under de quince bush?"

"I do," Christianna replied, "but there is nothing

strange about that. It has been there ever since I can remember anything."

"Well, when you were a little baby," the old woman went on to narrate, but dropping her style of communication, I will endeavor to give the story in brief, in my own poor version.

It appeared, by the old woman's account, that when Christianna was quite an infant, she had been taken very sick, and was left almost entirely by Mrs. Darly to the care of Nina, who nursed her with maternal care day and night. Notwithstanding all the old woman's assiduous attentions, the child grew worse, and one evening, when all the family were absent but old Nina, the little girl showed alarming symptoms of approaching death, and, in the language of the old woman, "stretched out her tiny little white hands, desiring to be lifted up," which her nurse did; but the child gasped as if suffocating; her limbs stiffened, and the soft, blue eyes of infancy glazed over with the cold, icy aspect of death. The old woman, thinking her charge had yielded up her breath, laid the infant again in her little bed, and retired to her own secluded chamber to weep.

Mrs. Darly at length came home late in the night with the rest of the family, and in company with O'Ferguson, her father, and Davy, held a whispering consultation around the couch of the little one. Presently they repaired to the garden, however, and with a light were engaged for some time around the quince bush which old Nina pointed out to Christianna; and the succeeding morning the old woman discovered a pile of fresh mould, thrown up in the semblance of a grave.

"Ever since that I never could bear to dig over the spot, but planted flowers an' thyme on it, an' pulled up de rank weeds dat grow'd ober it."

"But, Nina, that, you know, was not my grave," said Christianna, perplexed rather than enlightened by the narrative.

"Ah, me! honey, no, but what else it can be I neber could tell," replied the old woman, superstitiously.

"How long did I continue sick?" Christianna asked.

"De nex' mornin' you were runnin' about playing wid massa Tim, as well as if you neber had been sick," replied the old woman, then leaning her head on her hand, she muttered to herself in her accustomed manner.

"'Tis a strange tale," ejaculated Christianna, when Nina had finished her story, and she remained silent and thoughtful for some time ere resuming her inquiries.

"I think, Nina, you told me something about Mr. O'Ferguson's death once; but it has been so long since I have almost forgotten it."

"Oh, Lor', child! dat was a fearful night, and I hope dese old eyes shall neber see sech anoder," Nina resumed, rousing from her meditations. "De night de old man died, I thought de world was comin' to an en', sure eno'. I was in de kitchen, an' had ebery cranny stopped tight to keep out de storm; an' just afore he died, a clap of thunder come, that broke de door open, and a bleeze flew through de old house, making everything as light as day. Niel, dat same old drunken Niel, and massa Davy came tumblin' down stairs so hard I thought they were both kilt; an' de nex' minit I seed de old man, like a shadder, as white as snow, walk through de middle ob de light, go out at de door and into de garden. I could see him by de flashes ob lightnin' walking round dis same little grave, till at last he vanished away, an' I seed no more ob him. Eber since den somethin' has gone wrong about dis house. Ah, me! what's to be de end de Lor' only knows," and after this ominous foreboding, the old woman, leaning her head on the palm of her hand again, remained silent.

Christianna, bewildered and impressed by what she had heard, questioned the old woman no further.

CHAPTER XIII.

"There were the painted forms of other times,
'Twas all they left of virtue or of crimes,
Save vague tradition."—*Lara*.

The uncourteous deportment of the hag towards Ernest was soon absorbed by the interest he felt to know more of that beautiful girl, who seemed strangely to dwell in that loathsome den, shut out from all other society save its depraved occupants, whose dark and evil passions reigned paramount over the better and more noble impulses of human nature. Yet belying the old adage, she seemed to dwell among pitch undefiled, in spirit as in beauty, and to Ernest appeared moving amid those revolting scenes around her as an angel of light in the regions of darkness, and he unconsciously warbled with the *Peri*:

"No pearl e'er lay in the Roman's green water,
More pure in its shell than thy spirit in thee."

A vague recollection haunted him of having seen the face some time and elsewhere before, but the more he pondered and tried to divine where and when, the more confused and mystified became his thoughts. Was it some statue or painting he had gazed upon in the galleries of the East? No—there was nothing there the masters of antiquity had embodied in a Nymph, Sybil, or Pagan goddess—nothing but maidenly Anglo-American beauty. With his romantic curiosity excited to the utmost to know something more relative to the beautiful apparition which had that morning appeared before him, Ernest reached home, still pondering on what he had seen. He ascended to what he pleasantly styled his portrait gallery,

a recluse room in the upper and unfrequented part of the building, which Ernest, since his return, had fitted up.

Round the walls hung the antiquated portraits of the family, mingled with gleanings of his travels. On the mantel, in wild *melee*, lay various sea shells, bits of basalt, variegated crystals, ruby amber, and other mummeries of conchological and geological description, mingled with relics and broken specimens of ancient sculpture, extracted from the great depots of art and antiquity.

Ernest's great-great-grandfather, with his hair trimmed like a Roundhead in the time of Cromwell, dressed in straight-jacket and breeches, with broad silver knee-buckles—his extremities terminating in a military hat and heavy jack-boots—grimly smiled from the wall on his posterity. On the opposite side, suspended, were the representatives of a less remote period, with cued hair and cocked hats—in broad-skirted coats, with capacious flaps, bedighted in front with gilt buttons, gray small clothes, and blue stockings, ending in low shoes, ornamented with broad silver buckles. And down to the last generation but one, with frilled shirts and powdered wigs, decked in coat, vest and inexpressibles.

Mingled among the masculine portraits were the belles of antiquity, with long-stayed waists, hooped dresses or sweeping trains, and high-heeled shoes, contrasted with some trifling specimens of the fine artists, which Ernest had contrived to pick up in his peregrinations through the world.

But our hero vainly searched among the memorials of the past for a resemblance of those living features he had beheld in the morning. A velvet-covered case, edged with satin, or rather *had* been in its better days, but now cruelly embossed with cobwebs and dust, lay on the table. This he took carelessly in his hand, and lifting the cover that was secured with leather hinges, he put aside the gauze which concealed the portrait. *Bismilla!* He started back as his eyes met those of the picture, that seemed smiling upon him from the canvas.

“Whose face and form, whose soft, winning smile and

expressive features are those? 'Tis she—'tis that same countenance in miniature he had beheld in the morning in living perfection, or as near it as the painter's art would suffice to portray. He searched for the name, and faintly shaded, in small capitals, at the bottom, was *Mary Nevra*. Ernest gazed long and intently on those smiling features, and at length replacing the gauze, closed the lid, more puzzled, if possible, than before.

"Mary Nevra and the maid of O'Ferguson Hall—what cause for so striking a resemblance?"

He pondered, but pondered in vain, to divine why such a striking analogy should exist between entire strangers in friendship and in blood.

True, however, to the spirit of knight-errantry, when a mysterious lady had crossed his path, he could not repose till his casque and visor were laid at her feet, and his barb and brand pledged to her will.

CHAPTER XIV.

The great lawsuit between Mr. Darly, plaintiff—or rather, as the lawyers express themselves, David Darly and wife against Henry Greenberry, defendant, and for which so much and elaborate preparation had been making for some time previous, had at length commenced before the country court. All the principals, with their retinue of witnesses and friends, were in attendance at the shire-town, and Rumor, with her thousand tongues, whispered from day to day, by the mouth of some straggler, the doubtful success of either party to their anxious friends at home, keeping suspense constantly on tiptoe.

The bit of unexplained romance respecting the picture and the maid, however, served to distract Ernest's thoughts, in some measure, from the one subject of painful interest. Indulging in his wonted reveries, he found himself straying alone and idly along the retired banks of Wallowish, that glorious stream, sweeping in quiet beauty through a landscape of wild grandeur.

The warbling of Nature's songsters floated sweetly from the umbrageous woods—the bleat of flocks, the low of herds from the neighboring hills, and the whistle of the ploughman, as he drove his team merrily over the well-tilled field, mingled with the sound of the flowing waters, come ravishingly upon the ear of Ernest, as he strolled listlessly along.

These scenes, which would have been full of romantic incident to him when in his natural element of thought, now failed to fix his attention or invite his admiration, and he wandered on, without end or aim in view. The youthful dreamer drew unconsciously into the vicinity of the hag's domicile. He was, how-

ever, aroused from his meditations at length by hearing some one singing.

Ernest hurried along the zigzag path that wound around the rocks, to discover whence the music proceeded, and saw seated on a little eminence a few paces from the stream, a young hunter with a bevy of dogs around him. When he saw Ernest he ceased singing, and the dogs bounding up, sprung furiously at the intruder.

"Ho! down!" the hunter exclaimed fiercely, and dogs sneaked back in silence to their former place behind their master.

"You appear to be faithfully guarded," said Ernest, approaching the hunter.

"Pretty well, I rather think. Down Storm!—down you rascal!" he replied, speaking to Ernest, and reprimanding the old hound for showing his teeth to the stranger at the same time.

"You have your hounds under good command."

"Have to keep 'em so—a feller that beats these hills," replied the hunter, mechanically.

"This is a beautiful picturesque for sporting," Ernest continued, endeavoring to draw this laconically speaking Nimrod into conversation. "You can enjoy the one and admire the other, if you are a lover of Nature."

"'Tis rough enough, if that agrees with your idea of beauty. I'd rather for my part it was smoother. Reynard can double too often for good sport, and as for looking at rocks and trees I never admired it much—though Christianna can gaze at such things for hours together," replied the man of "horse and hound."

"I believe I have the honor of speaking with Mr. Timon Daily?" Ernest said, inquiringly.

"Well, it's all that's of him, I guess," this offspring of the house of O'Ferguson replied, laconically, "and if you'd like to take a chase over the hills, why just say so, and you can soon have one; for there's some-

thing in the wind by the way that old hound is snuffing the air. I never knew him to lie in my life, and"——

And it's uncertain when or where the follower of the chase would not have ended, had not Ernest interrupted him in the beginning of the panegyric on the sagacity and remarkable traits peculiar to the canine species.

"Thank you, Mr. Darly. I am sorry other business compels me to decline your invitation to share the sport. I believe you are the only hunting member of the family."

"Ay," replied the fellow, whistling to his dogs and conversing with Ernest by turns; "Christianna, like yourself, is fond of looking at rocks, and hills, and trees"——

"Your sister is a very romantic girl," said Ernest, interrupting him suddenly.

"*Christianna*," returned the hunter, laying strong emphasis on the name, "likes books and walks, or rambles, as she calls them, and such like things; but I have no turn for the like trifling amusements."

"Christianna and your sister are one and the same, I imagine," Ernest remarked, noticing the peculiar aspiration with which young Darly pronounced the girl's name.

"It'll take an older head than mine to tell that," was the calm reply of the fellow, who, springing to his feet the same instant at the bay of a hound, shouted the loud cheering cry, "Hark, hillalo!" bounding down the glen in pursuit of his dogs, and leaving Ernest unceremoniously alone.

"What a strange animal of the human kind," Ernest soliloquized, as he turned his steps in the opposite direction. "Nothing is a source of pleasure or amusement to him but the discordant notes of those hounds, and an occasional glimpse of the fox. For these he will forego the fatigue of climbing hills and descending

valleys all day long, well rewarded if he catches an occasional glimpse or a remote sound of the chase."

Thus communing with his own thoughts, Ernest soon found himself in O'Ferguson Hall, the real place of his destination—whether conscious of it or not—a lover—for such we must really style the fascinated youth, as he was not always aware where he was going, although in the direct track to his mistress' bower. Such a meeting now could not but be congenial to the maiden's feelings, which of late had lately been estranged from old familiarities that are wont to be most endeared to the human heart. But the shrouding mystery that hung around Christianna's life—making her a stranger to self—had frozen up the well-spring of sympathy which is inherent to the human breast—giving all the world to her an aspect of distant coldness.

Ernest entered the unseemly portal of that dilapidated structure, but the young lady was not within. He inquired of old Nina for her young mistress, and received for answer thtt she had walked out a short time previous. The young gallant paused for a moment, and the thought struck him that she had retired to her romantic seat among the cliffs above, to enjoy the beauties of the surrounding prospect. Up the winding path, bordered by copse-wood, that wound its serpentine course through glen and brake, till it reached the summit of the ridge, Ernest bent his steps in search of the fair apparition of those solitudes.

Seated beneath a monntain birch that bent its top over the rocky precipice, as if to peer into the stream beneath, Ernest at length discovered the fair object of his search—like Flora McIver in her wild mountain glen, as she appeared to young Waverly.

The maiden rose confusedly when Ernest came up and saluted her, but affecting not to perceive it, he made some attempts to lead her into conversation, which, however, but partially succeeded.

Finding the maiden listened to his words, and she

had gained her self-possession, he continued the discourse :

"I do not now wonder that you so much admire the romantic prospect from your mountain terrace, Miss Darly. 'Tis really beautiful, and surpasses any idea I had formed of its presenting so noble a view," Ernest said, and he spoke without flattery, as he surveyed the scene that spread out before him.

"Yes, it is beautiful!" Christianna said, resuming the conversation. "I too, used to admire it as you do."

"And is it possible it has lost all its interest for you, Miss Darly?" said Ernest.

"These scenes have ceased to interest me now," replied the girl, mournfully, "as I have ceased to be Miss Darly."

"You ceased to be Miss Darly! Why what mean you Christianna?" Ernest said, with a degree of real surprise, as he bent his dark, inquiring gaze on the fair face of the maiden.

Christianna related the strange story of old Nina, while Ernest listened with a curious and attentive ear.

"What means all this?" he said, when the girl had finished, stamping his boot-heel into the mossy ground in his perplexity.

"'Tis a riddle I am unable to solve," replied the maiden. "To know who, or what I really am, I would give all the world beside, and the more I ponder upon the subject, the more complexed and obscure it doth seem."

"Why, really, this is strange," said Ernest. "Is not the fact of your mysterious birth generally known, and you can discover no clue to its explanation?"

"No; my opportunities of testing the matter—since it has been made known to me, which has been but recently—are limited in the extreme. I have lived here in this secluded spot an entire stranger to all around. Unknowing and unknown, I have passed my days—my

mother—or she whom I had vainly imagined was such—has been a terror rather than aught else, to the country round, and her repulsive deportment has forbidden all approaches of friendship from others.”

Conversing in this strain, Ernest and the maiden descended from their rocky *observatory* to the little garden which contained the reputed grave. There they found old Nina, who corroborated what she had said before.

Ernest pondered deeply on what he had seen and heard, after gathering all the particulars he could from the old woman. The dark and fearful thought flashed upon him, involuntarily intruding itself upon his excited fancy, and he exclaimed, musingly :

“Can it be possible—bad and abandoned as she is reputed to be—that she would stoop to the perpetration of so black a crime as infanticide? Surely she would not—though how are we to explain the sudden disappearance of Rose Tomlin? Ah, that is what hangs a veil of mystery over all.”

CHAPTER XV.

Ernest was perplexed for some time to determine what steps he should pursue, being convinced that all was not right, and that Mrs. Darly and her clique were privy to some dark and hidden crime. He at length, however, determined to procure the aid of a legal officer, and investigate the supposed grave. Consequently the coroner and several persons, who were summoned to assist in disinterring the dead, appeared on the ground and commenced digging in the spot previously pointed out by old Nina.

After digging a while, Pat McCleary, who was the first man with his spade, shouted out :

“Howly Mother! there’s the coffin!” crossing his

breast reverentially as he struck his digger down against a hard substance in the bottom of the pit.

"Clear away the dirt, Pat, till we discover what it is," said the impatient Ernest, and all drew close around the scene of Pat's labor, with increased interest.

The son of green Erin did as requested, and soon removed from the bottom of the pit the broken lid of a decayed box, containing the remains of a child partially decomposed. A lock of its flaxen hair still adhered to the ghastly skull, and by the size and appearance of the bones, they arrived at the conclusion that the tenant of the tomb was about three years of age at the time of its death.

A surgeon was summoned, who, upon an anatomical examination of the remains, pronounced the subject a female.

After the inquisition had been gone through with, the grave was again filled up, leaving the sleeper of the tomb in undisturbed repose for the future.

The trial that had been raging for a few days previous, at the shire town, with doubtful success, must soon draw to a close. To have it postponed till further light could be thrown on the subject, was all important to the defendants, and Ernest lost no time in taking the steps which the circumstances of the case seemed to call for. Arriving at home, he hastily wrote a synopsis of the events that had transpired, and calling a groom, gave him the letter, ordering the fellow to spare neither spur nor scourge till he delivered the epistle into Mr. Greenberry's hands.

The progressing trial was the all-absorbing topic of conversation among the multitude; and to adopt their opinions of the affair, Mr. Greenberry's case was a hopeless one, Niel's conclusive testimony having left no chance for the defendant. The last lawyer was addressing his concluding remarks to the jury, ere they should withdraw to make out their verdict. Counselors were collecting their musty volumes, and gram-

ming their green bags with papers; hungry court-men glancing at their watches, and eating-house bells ringing a merry requiem to hunger.

Mrs. Darly stood in the bar among the lawyers as a chief amongst his officers.

"With spectacles on nose and pouch on side," like Shakspeare's man in the sixth age—a grum smile distorting her repulsive features, as her dark bosom beat high with sanguine hope at the prospect of ultimate success.

Alas! how vain are all our most fond expectations! Those delightful visions of triumph were destined never to be realized! The balance in which the fortunes of the hag were placed, and which seemed all along to preponderate in her favor, was suddenly to turn against her.

Mr. Greenberry, too, was beside his lawyers, regarding the progress of events with a troubled aspect, while the counsel were perplexing their witty brains to raise some point that might give a turn to the present appearance of affairs.

Things were in this condition when Ernest's messenger entered and handed the note to Mr. Greenberry. He suddenly broke open the seal, and read; then presented it to his attorney, watching the countenance of the latter while he ran his eye over the contents of the note. A flush of exultation rose on the face of the lawyer, as he perused it, and turning to his colleague and client, they whispered apart for a moment.

When the pleader for the plaintiff had resumed his seat, and the judge was preparing to instruct the jury, one of Greenberry's lawyers arose and moved a postponement of the trial, on the plea that further evidence had been brought to light. To this Mrs. Darly and her attorneys warmly objected. A debate ensued—the court interfered to investigate the matter, and decided arbitrarily in the hag's favor that the trial should proceed.

This was a critical moment for Greenberry ; but one of his counsel, rising in the midst of the confusion and excitement that prevailed, changed the aspect of affairs in his client's favor by calling out :

"We draw the jury."

The hammer that the chief justice held in his hand the next instant fell commanding silence—the crier shouted, "Court is adjourned till to-morrow !" and in another minute judges had left the bench, jurymen the box, lawyers the bar, and witnesses the stand

The sheriff locked the doors behind the elbowing crowd, and the motley throng left the silent halls of justice for the clatter of taverns and the savory fumes of eating-houses.

Warrants were issued for the arrest of Mrs. Darly and her colleagues ; but a consummate General is seldom taken in the field of battle. The hag, too well divining the future by present indications, made a precipitate retreat with her gang while all was yet in confusion, escaping the meditated arrest.

CHAPTER XVI.

Dear reader, we must again return to the obscure abode of Niel Riley, and for the last time, to behold the tragic conclusion of a life abandoned to crime and intemperance.

Seated in the mouldering hall, around that crazy old deal table, which supported a black, earthen jug and several wretched drinking cups, were Niel and Culpepper. The night was dark, and the old house gloomy and silent—situated in the wild seclusion of barren and uncultivated wastes.

Niel pushed his feet out towards the smoking brands on the hearth, and continued the conversation more moodily, which he had been striving to carry on in a lively and jovial vein.

"I say you are churlish, Culpepper—downright churlish, to refuse a social glass with old friends."

"I have accepted the social glass too often," replied the surly guest, "with those who termed themselves friends—so often, indeed, that I came near losing my position as a man among the human family."

"Those who termed themselves friends!" said Niel, repeating the other's words with a scornful sneer, "you say you have been social with—and did they not always prove themselves friends?"

"No!—men that have led me to degradation are pretty creatures to style friends, to be sure!" returned Culpepper.

"You were never difficult to tempt, God knows. Ha! ha!" laughed Niel. "Followed without much persuasion!"

"Be the past as it may," said Culpepper, reddening with rage, "I have done with the filth! In future my skirts shall be kept clear of the pollution!"

"Since you have become so compunctious," returned Niel, ironically, "I suppose you will think yourself obliged to make open and clear confession to your temperance friends and condolers, of your past sins; standing a fair chance thereby, for your humility, of swinging betwixt heaven and earth, at the hands of those newly made friends, for the valuable aid you rendered in peddling Rose Tomlin out of the world. Ha! ha!"

"Laugh while you may," said Culpepper; "but there's an hour approaching, when, perhaps, the subject will not afford mirth sufficient to excite your risibility."

"What! you traitor!—would you dare betray your best friends?" exclaimed Niel, passionately.

"My best friends!" returned his companion. "And who are those friends, I pray you?"

"Have I not been a friend to you? Has not Helen? Has not Davy—poor, simple Davy, though he be? Was not Miles O'Ferguson, while he lived? And would you—yes, you, who have been provided for by us all—be guilty of one of the blackest sins—ingratitude?" Neil ex-

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claimed wildly, growing fearful as the dread thought rose up in horror's shape before his fevered imagination.

"Friends! and what kind of friends have ye been?" said Culpepper. "Friends to entice me away from the paths of virtue and usefulness, in order to promote your own selfish ends! Friends that have besotted me that I might assist you in your own dark designs! Friends, who have befriended me to make me a party in your felony and crimes? Can such friends or friendship promote happiness and peace? What reward has your unhallowed career brought you? Degradation, misery, wretchedness! You have seen your family scattered like chaff before the four winds of heaven! You have taxed your brain and perjured your soul to obtain a miserable subsistence—and what is your reward? Ignominy, ruin and death!" Culpepper shouted, stamping his feet violently on the floor—the preconcerted signal.

The rapid tramp of men the next moment was heard on the porch, with a violent rush against the door. Niel sprang to his feet, his haggard and bloated features more wildly distorted by fear and apprehension. The men rushed in, and Niel retreated through the door of an adjoining apartment.

"Stand! or ye die!" said the constable, drawing a pistol and pursuing the fugitive.

"Head him, or he will escape by the other door," shouted Ernest, who was in the posse.

"By St. Patherick!" exclaimed Pat McCleary, taking a circuit around the old porch, with shillelah in hand, "ye're an ould bird, but not quite up to trap this time, if ye did slip through our fingers before."

Niel by this time had made good his escape from the house, by a door in the west end; but McCleary had also gained the steps that led down from the high porch to the ground, cutting off his retreat in that direction.

"Surrender! ye ould baby thief, or by all the divils in purgatory, I'll lay two feet, and an inch o' hickory over yer ould roguish pate!" said the Irishman, standing prepared to receive his opponent.

Neil, however, did not feel disposed to comply with Pat's request. The fugitive, finding his retreat cut off in this direction, bethought him of the balustrade on the back side, over which he might leap to the ground without incurring much injury. Thither the fugitives turned, with Pat advancing on him from the outside, while the constable and Ernest, with their gang, were pressing him hotly on the other flank. But, in attempting to gain the desired point, the fugitive stepped on a detached plank, placed loosely over a hole in the decayed floor, and was precipitated into a stone stairway, ten feet beneath.

"Howly Mother! are ye kilt, Misther Riley?" cried Pat, whose relenting nature moved him to sympathy the moment misfortune had overtaken his enemy.

A deep, heavy groan from below was all the answer McCleary received.

"Howly Saints!" continued the son of Erin, crossing himself, reverentially, "the man has broke his neck! Misther Ernest, bring a light till we get the poor crather up," and Pat hurried down to rescue the unfortunate Niel.

Lights were procured, and the victim of crime and misfortune removed into the hall where previously he had spent many a jovial night in drinking and revelry. The unfortunate wretch had broken a blood-vessel by the fall, and his debauched and decayed constitution gave no hope of a recovery. From his mouth and nostrils the blood was streaming; and in addition to other injuries sustained by the fall, a shoulder-blade had been broken. The bleeding victim lay quiet for some time, where his conductors had placed him, while they stood around in silence, gazing on the wretched being, whose life had been passed in former schemes of villany, and who seemed now about to expiate his crimes by so sudden and terrible a death.

Ernest proposed sending for a physician, but Niel, who had revived a little, shook his head in despair. He motioned to have his head held up, endeavoring to speak, but the power failed him—he sunk back, and casting one rueful, one remorseful look of anguish and unutterable des-

pair on all around—gave a few convulsive struggles, and lay cramped in the cold power of death.

Thus passed the spirit of Niel; by the sudden stroke of death, snatched away from earth and its tribunals—shrouded in the dark mantle of his crimes, verifying the promise made to the wicked—"He that hardeneth his neck shall be destroyed suddenly."

CHAPTER XVII.

While these desolate scenes were being enacted at the desolate home of Niel Riley, driven to desperation, Mrs. Darly and her doughty spouse were meditating deeds of a more sanguinary nature than any that had yet dyed the dark catalogue of their crimes.

In an adjoining apartment to O'Ferguson Hall, built of rough boards, which was lumbered with old cutlery and various other mechanical implements, stood Mrs. Darly, with a light in one hand, that gleamed through the crevices between the rough planks, and a glittering dagger in the other, which she had been whetting on a ponderous grindstone that stood in one corner of the rickety shanty.

Davy regarded the hag with a look of awe and fear, quailing beneath her glance when she darted her dark flashing eyes upon him.

"Come, Davy, it will do now. Try if you can strike that black spot on the door," said Helen, presenting the dagger to the trembling Davy.

The doughty husband took hold of the weapon and made a plunge at the mark, but his agitation was so great that he struck two feet from the spot he intended.

"Haw, haw! man, you could scarcely hit a barn-door. You must have some brandy to settle your nerves!" said the hag, affecting to regard Davy's trepidation in a humorous manner.

"Oh, I can never do it—indeed I can't!" said the husband, beseechingly, trembling in every joint.

"Davy, you've grown childish," replied the hag. "See with what I can strike the spot."

So saying, she took the dagger from his trembling hand and drove it into the center of the sable mark. Drawing the steel out again with a loud, feigned laugh at her superior expertness, she presented the instrument to her hopeful spouse, saying:

"Try and redeem your injured reputation this time."

Davy did as he was ordered, inflicting another wound upon the board, within twelve inches of the mark this time, however.

"Try it again! You're improving," said the hag.

Davy made three or four more plunges, still improving in his aim as his excitement subsided, till he at length succeeded in sticking the blade into the desired spot.

"That will do," said his better half. "I knew you would succeed by practice—it's a great school for awkward folks. Now we will go and finish the business," she continued, leading the way.

"Oh, I can never do it!" persisted Davy, cowering behind his mistress, and following reluctantly.

"You cowardly fool!" returned the hag. "You *shall* do what I bid you, or I'll try its point on your own vile carcass. Here, swallow this!" presenting a glass of spirits, which the trembling Davy made out, however, to drink without a second request.

Mrs. Darly led the way up a winding staircase, and entered a chamber where the beautiful Christianna was reclining on a sofa, wrapt in soft slumber. The unextinguished light, sinking gradually into the socket, cast a faint and fainter glare over the apartment. A half open volume lay on the stand, which the maiden had been reading when the leaden-eyed god insensibly stole upon her.

"She has not retired yet!" whispered the hag to her consort, as they cautiously approached the sleeping maiden, setting the light in such a position as not to disturb her. "But it is no matter—she sleeps soundly. Now, Davy, strike, and all is over and easily done!"

But Davy shuddered, recoiling from that fair form as it

lay heaving in sweet repose—a bright smile playing about her rosy lips, and the shining ringlets lying in sable clusters over her graceful neck and peerless bosom.

“Oh, God! I can’t do it!—do not urge me! The blood—the blood! I see it bubbling out of that white breast, and running in dark currents about my feet—smoking in curdled pools over the floor! And my hands! I see them stained with blood—it will not wash off! Those blue eyes, too, will open! I know they will, and grow glassy—and look at me as his did! I see him now—his gray locks, and the black blood streaming out of his side! Oh, heavens! such a sight! Do let me go! She will awaken and scream—I know she will! I hear it now—I will hear it forever, as I did that groan—that terrible groan! I hear it—it is ringing in my ears louder than thunder!”

“Gracious! give me the knife, coward!” said the hag, reproachfully, taking the dagger from his hand and advancing a step towards the sleeping maiden.

“Oh, for pity’s sake, do not—do not do it, Helen!” continued Davy, his wild eyes glaring with fright, and his shrinking form trembling like an aspen.

At this critical moment a loud knocking was heard at the door below.

“There—there! they are watching us! They are upon us! We are lost—lost!” and the terrified husband wrung his hands in despair, awaking, if possible, to a new sense of fear.

“Gracious! be quiet, you provoking fool, till we see who it is that dares disturb the quiet of our family at this time o’ night,” said the hag, hastening in the direction the noise proceeded from, dragging the half senseless and stupefied Davy after her.

“Who’s there?” demanded the dauntless Helen, as she reached the bottom of the stairs.

“Lord love yer soul! It’s nothin’ more nor a poor benighted crather that intrates yer leddyship, in the name of the howly saints, for a shelter underneath yer roof till mornin’, an’ may our blissed Vargin reward yez! There’s

no sheriff nor nothin' at all to trouble yez, good leddy," the stranger answered to Mrs. Darly's peremptory summons.

"Begone, you Irish scoundrel!" screamed the hag, with all a woman's violence, interlarding her command with several appropriate epithets, altogether too *pleasant* to repeat to delicate ears. "I know you, you rascal! Do you think to deceive me with such hypocritical cant? Scamper, you hound! or I will set the dogs after you instantly."

"Och! now, sorrow be to the ould divil!" said Pat McCleary—for the distressed person was no other than he—finding his *ruse* had failed. "Who but the ould sarpint herself, or a witch, could see who I, Misther McCleary, am this dark night? Open the door, ye old brock, or, by St. Patherick, we'll bring the shanty down about your lugs, ye ould heifer!"

The hag replied to Pat in his own terms, while she caused Davy to assist her in securing the door more effectually.

"Mrs. Darly, I, Jacob Stuyvesant, sheriff of the county, on the authority of a State warrant, demand admittance into this house," vociferated the pompous little sheriff, finding Mrs. Darly had discovered who her friends outside were.

"Be off," replied the hag to the official dignitary, applying the appropriate adjective, "before you get another bastinadoing!"

"Break in the door—break in the door!" said Ernest, impatiently, "ere they make it too strong to force," throwing himself against the portal, but the stubborn door resisted the light frame of the young man, and he rebounded with the shock.

"Japers! let me thry it, Masther Ernèst," said McCleary, plunging like a bull against the barricade entrance, and landing headlong in the middle of the passage. Pat, springing to his feet the next instant, shouted:

"Arrah, my boys, come on!"

The men poured in at the forced entrance, and Mrs

Daly retreated to a remote corner of the room, drawing her dagger, and threatening instant death to the first who was bold enough to attempt laying hold of her.

"Och! ye ould scape-gallows! Will ye attempt dhraw-in' yer murtherous weapons on gintlemen?" Pat said, twirling the cudgel in his fingers, and giving the hag's elbow a smart thwack, which sent her knife to the opposite side of the room. "Deliver up to the clutches of his Grace—the divil burn ye for a witch!"

Mrs. Darly and her doughty partner, who stood motionless with fear in one corner of the room during the scene above described, were secured and taken in charge of by the sheriff and his posse.

Christianna, being roused by the tumult, came terrified and weeping into the room, at the conclusion of the scrape, and persisted in accompanying her friends whithersoever they were conducted that night.

After Ernest's curiosity had been excited by the strange picture, and increased by old Nina's story, he spared neither labor nor pains to ferret out and sift the mystery to the bottom. By accident he fell in with Dandy Culpepper, who, it appears, had begun to feel some compunction and misgiving in relation to his future life; and Ernest, after finding he was one of Niel's associates, very justly concluded he knew something of that worthy's dark and secret actions, continued to work upon his disturbed conscience till he revealed what he knew of Niel's and Mrs. Darly's knavery. Never having, however, been entirely confided in by Niel—for that wily instigator was a close observer of character—he was not in possession of all the roguery carried on by Helen and her gang; but being Niel's drinking companion, had picked up a good deal of information from the latter in their frequent bacchanalian orgies.

Having ascertained that the nurse took the children out on the lawn, in clear evenings, to play, Niel procured Culpepper's services for the above mentioned reward, and dressing him in a red wig and other uncouth articles of

apparel for a disguise, started him in the vocation of a pedler, at the proper time, with directions to decoy the girl, by the display of finery, from her charge, keeping her attention distracted till he and O'Ferguson, with Helen Darly and Davy, should surprise and carry off little Rose. How well this plot succeeded, the reader is already apprised, but after her abduction, what had become of the child, Culpepper was unable exactly to tell; but by the grave discovered in the garden, and the known desperate character of the parties, they inferred that the poor helpless innocent had been murdered.

The hag and Davy, after their apprehension, were conducted to the residence of Mr. Greenberry, where a magistrate was in waiting to examine the parties and commit them for trial that same night.

"Mrs. Darly," said the magistrate, addressing the hag, "what answer have you to make to the following charges? Firstly—You are charged, on the affidavit of respectable witnesses, with being an aider and abetter in the abduction and supposed murder of Rose Tomlin—an orphan placed under the guardianship of Henry Greenberry. Secondly—For being privy to the murder and robbery of John James Tomlin; and, thirdly"—

"Gracious!" said the hag, interrupting the magistrate, "have we been brought here at this hour of the night, among a gang of villains, to be insulted by impertinent questions? You scoundrels!" she screamed, stamping her foot till the house rang, "release me instantly, or I'll prosecute every rascal of you for false imprisonment!"

"What can you say for yourself, Mr. Darly, for you, also, are accused of being a participator in these grave offences? Do you know anything of the murder of Mr. Tomlin?"

"Y-e-s—no," Davy replied, growing more terrified, apparently, at the sound of his own voice.

"Silence, you stupid dog! or I'll tear the tongue out of your lying throat!" screamed Mrs. Darly, stamping her foot with her accustomed violence.

Davy skulked from the threatening gestures and awful frowns of the termagent, looking as though he would fain

discover a northwest passage of escape from this world of difficulty.

With several interruptions, caused by the hag attempting to fly on her dear partner during his examination, but being as often restrained by the officers and guard, which very much emboldened Davy to proceed, finding he had so strong a party on his side—the following purport was drawn from the doughty husband :

Knowing that Mr. Tomlin, on the night he was robbed, would be returning from New York with a sum of money, Niel and O'Ferguson had planned the surprise and robbery which took place in the dark pass. With no intention to take his life, however, the parties arranged their plans and took their stations, taking Davy along to help, if any difficulty should arise in making themselves masters of the money. Niel made the first attempt to detain the traveler, by seizing his bridle, but the heavy stroke dealt on his arm disengaged the rider for a moment. The next instant he was seized by O'Ferguson, who dragged him from his saddle. The latter, finding Tomlin grappled with him, and was likely to prove an over-match, drew a knife and stabbed his victim to secure his own release. Thus crime step by step leads its perpetrators on to commit deeds, which, on cool reflection, they would shudder to think of.

After Davy had finished his account of the murder and robbery of Mr. Tomlin, the magistrate continued the examination, as follows :

"Now, can you tell us who were the murderers of Rose Tomlin?"

Davy looked towards Christianna, who stood petrified with amazement between Mrs. Greenberry and Ernest, at what she saw and heard, and replied :

"Rose is not dead."

"How is this, sir?—Rose is not dead?" said the magistrate. "Then who was buried in that grave in the garden?"

"Ah, sir," replied Davy, "we carried Rose off, but we did not murder her—no, no, we preserved her life, and adopted her. That grave in the garden is poor little

Christianna's, who died a natural death; and that is **not** Christianna," pointing to the maiden, "but Rose Tomlin, whom we have ever cherished as a daughter."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Greenberry, clasping the girl in her arms. "And this is my lost child, my darling Rose, whom I pledged the dying to protect!—discovered, like the lost Joseph, after many years, and restored to her mother's arms—at least the only mother she ever knew."

"And this is my adopted sister," said Ernest, taking Rose by the hand when his mother had released her, "and who, I hope, will be to me my more than sister in future."

The maiden's blushing cheek and trembling hand bespoke more than her lips could reveal. Mrs. Darly, who had remained a quiet spectator for some time, of the affecting scene, now relieved Rose's confusion, by breaking in upon the absorbed parties.

"Gracious girl, I suppose you are satisfied now. Your curiosity has murdered us all; and what have you gained more than we offered you a thousand times? Poor girl! but I forgive you—it was not all your fault. You had wicked instigators, and though you have stabbed a dagger in the breast that nourished you, and broken a mother's heart, I forgive it all. Let me embrace you once more before we part forever—ever! That is a mournful word!"

Rose, melted into tears by this affecting speech, from one that she could not but regard still as a mother, flew towards the hag with open arms; but Ernest, suspecting Helen's words were but the siren's song to decoy her victim, narrowly watched the hag's movements, and saw the hilt of a poniard glitter in her hand, as she attempted to draw it from her breast. With a quick jerk he hurled her to the opposite side of the room, as the demon-like woman made a desperate lunge with all her strength, at the fair breast of Rose.

"Oh, wretch! wretch!" she screamed, stamping her foot and rending her hair. "But you have only half blasted my hopes! the steel is robbed of but half its victims!" plunging the poniard into her own breast ere any on

could interfere to disarm her. "'Tis done! tis done!" she shouted wildly. "Now do your worst!—the dagger was poisoned! Oh, but for one more victim, and I would have been avenged! avenged!"

The hag sunk back as she uttered the infernal wish, with a terrific yell, and expired instantly.

CHAPTER XIX.

Indian summer had begun to tint the woodland with its golden hue. The notes of songsters no longer resounded in deep chorus from their forest homes, but the plaintive strains of a low warbler might be heard at intervals, borne lonely and sad on the autumnal breeze like a dirge to the ear. The Wallowish roiled along the dark waters with a hoarser flow, as they swept by the fading drapery that festooned its banks.

Ernest and his betrothed, for such now was Rose, were straying along the dark stream, in one of those delightful days peculiar to that season, viewing the old familiar scenes among which Rose had passed her lonely hours of childhood, and grown up tender and beautiful as one of the wild flowers that bloomed among the rocks of her secluded home. The two lovers gradually drew near the old mansion which had been the home of Rose's infancy. They paused and gazed in silence on the crumbling pile—the deserted Hall!

"For gloom had gathered o'er the gate," and desolation seemed to have passed over, leaving its footsteps to decay on all around. A small blue thread of smoke quietly curled above the cliffs from one of the chimneys, the only sight that betokened life about the desolate spot.

"Ah, let's enter the old Hall," said Rose, sadly, "and see old Nina, and, if possible, persuade her to leave this lonely place and live with us."

The young couple entered the decaying pile. In the smoky kitchen they found the old woman seated,

solitary and alone, on her old chair, resting her forehead on her hand. A faint blaze flickered on the smoke-begrimed hearth.

At the entrance of Rose and Ernest, the old woman looked up, shading her eyes with her hand.

"Gor bless you, honey!" she said. "Hab you come to see old Nina? I was jus' thinkin' about you, honey, an' wonderin' if you had forgot your ole nuss, that used to tote you about in her arms; an' here you've come to see de ole woman. Well, dat is kin', dat is kin' not to forget me altogether."

"Oh, no, we have not forgotten you," said Rose, affected by the old woman's simple speech, "but just come to take you with us, if you will go, where you can be provided with everything that will contribute to your comfort and happiness."

"Yes, come with me, old mother," said Ernest, "and you shall never want while we have anything to bestow."

"De Lor' bless you, children! Ye mean to be kin' to ole Nina—I know ye do," replied the old woman; but let me stay here—no, no, don't ax me to leab de ole place. I want to lay my ole head down in dese walls, when de Lor' please to call for me, an' die. Missis is gone now, and massa Davy, an' ole massa of all died here—poor man!"

"Ah, Lor' honey, dis ole head can never forget de past till it sleeps in de silent grave. No, no, children, I can't go—ye mean to be kin', I know ye do—but let me lib an' die among de ole scenes. Ole Nina 'll soon sleep along wid missis an' massa, an' all. Poor woman! To come to such an' en'—it makes a-body cry to think ob it," and the tears ran down her withered cheeks.

'Tis pleasant to see the young weep—their transient sorrow passeth away like April showers, and the young heart exults again in the gladness of sunshine and smiles. But to behold large tears roll down the withered cheeks of old age—ah, it is sorrowful and

affecting! For terrible must be the tumult of emotions that tears open again the sealed up fountain of grief in the heart of the aged!

"Ah, me!" the old woman continued, after drying her tears, "she was cross, an' scolded some time; but she was kin' for all dat."

Rose and Ernest used every entreaty to induce the old woman to abandon those familiar objects linked to her heart by so many sorrowful recollections, and among which she had dwelt till they had become, as it were, a part of her existence; but she only replied to their entreating solicitations:

"Ah, me! I can't bear to leab de old place—it looks so like leabin' ole friends behin' and goin' away among strangers. No, no, children, don't try to turn me from what I've set my heart upon doin'. Ole Nina's not long for dis worl'—she must soon go to her long home, where missis is gone before, an' it's her last wish to close her ole eyes among things she had been used to so long."

The old woman shook her head despairingly, and leaned it on her palm, in silence.

Finding entreaties were in vain, they left her alone in her sorrow, Ernest leading Rose away weeping from the old nurse.

They took care to supply the faithful old servant with everything that could contribute to her comfort while she sojourned on this earth, which was not long, however, for,

"Scared by the autumn blast of grief," she soon closed her eyes on the cares and sorrows of this world, and went, as she pathetically expressed it, to her long home beyond the tomb, where her mistress had gone before.

'Tis strange, but true, there die none so abandoned but are followed to the tomb by some real friend who mourns their exit from this world in the spirit of truth and piety; bedewing the grave with tears of sorrow. Such was Nina's grief for her mistress.

Davy was tried before the county court as an abettor in the murder of Mr. Tomlin, and convicted of the crime charged against him. But knowing the only real crime was his misfortune in being unavoidably situated amongst dark and wicked spirits, who sometimes made him a means of accomplishing their revolting purposes, the court before which he was convicted signed a petition, got up by Mr. Greenberry, for his reprieve, and Davy was pardoned by the Governor.

Severed from the discontented spirits who dragged him on a course from which he shrank in fear, Davy soon relapsed into the quiet and passive thing for which Providence had designated him, and became a "hewer of wood and drawer of water" in the employ of Mr. Greenberry.

The estate of Mrs. Darly, after her death, soon came under the hammer of the auctioneer. Ernest became the purchaser, and constructing a neat and handsome mansion on a spot more appropriate for a residence than that on which O'Ferguson Hall stood, he and his fresh blooming Rose took up their abode, where they enjoyed all the delights of a rural life.

Pat McCleary went to reside with "Masther Ernest" and was ever found ready to espouse the quarrel of the oppressed with his good shillelah, and succor the distressed to the extent of his means.

Short and transient was the childlike grief of young Timon Darly—or Tim, the huntsman, as Pat used to designate him—for the deplorable calamity that had fallen upon his house. But the heart of the young hunter was not one that care weighed down with the weight of his afflictions; and soon forgetting his sorrows in the pleasures of the passing moment, he followed his hounds with the light heart that none but the simple-minded and unreflecting can know. He was subsequently wedded to young Kate, the lass whom he immortalized in his wild rhapsody—who was no less a personage than the bar-maid of a country inn—and spent his days in the capacity of a farmer.

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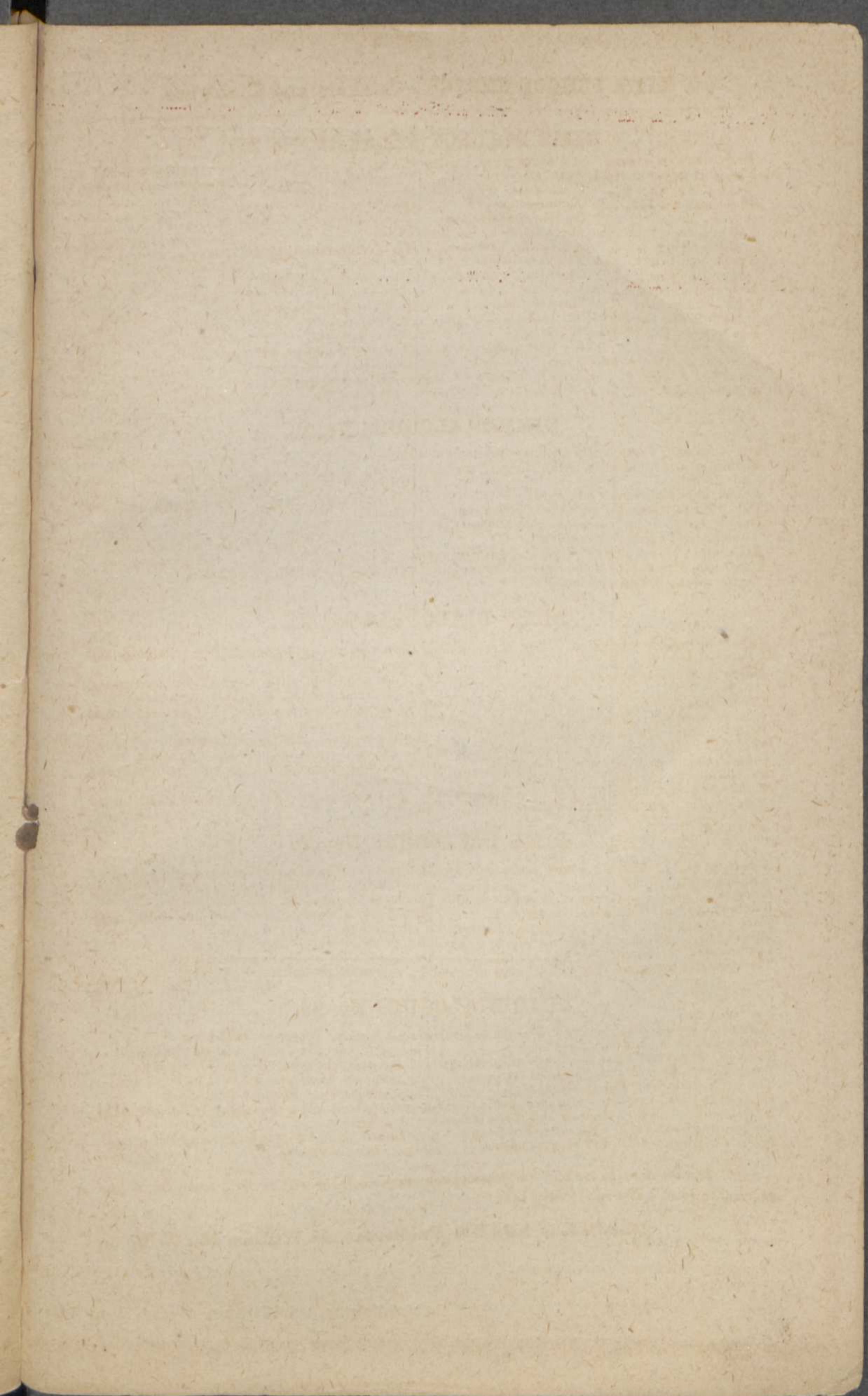
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